



AGENDA

Burien Airport Committee

Tuesday, December 17, 2019 – 6:00 p.m.

Burien Community Center, 14700 6th Ave. SW, Shorewood Room

Page #

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **APPROVE DRAFT MINUTES**
 - 2.1 Approve minutes from the November 18, 2019 Burien Airport Committee meeting. 3 - 4
[November 18, 2019 BAC Draft Minutes](#)
3. **BUSINESS AGENDA**
 - 3.1 Update on Current Activities: 5 - 9
 - a. Burien vs. FAA findings and next steps.
 - b. December 17th meeting with Port leadership on StART.
 - c. Department of Commerce Study status and concerns.
 - d. Release of UW Ultra-fine Particles Study and next steps.
 - e. Meeting Request with EPA.
[City of SeaTac Letter on Commerce Study 112719](#)
[Joint Aviation Meeting StART List 111919](#)
[Joint Aviation Meeting StART List-Edited](#)
 - 3.2 New Information: 11 - 27
 - a. Alaska Airlines concerns about Sea-Tac Airport growth.
 - b. Horizon Air Safety concerns.
[News Article1-Dec19](#)
[News Articles2-Dec19](#)
 - 3.3 Brainstorm preliminary priorities for 2020.
 - 3.4 Discuss Process for Burien Airport Committee membership for 2020. 29 - 31
[Res405-Amend Airport Committee](#)
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
5. **ADJOURNMENT**

The next Burien Airport Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m at the Burien Community Center.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Councilmember Nancy Tosta (Chair); Mayor Jimmy Matta;
Councilmember Pedro Olguin**

Larry Cripe; Jeff Harbaugh; Sharyn Parker; Javier Tordable; Debi Wagner

Ex-Officio Member: Brian Wilson, City Manager

**Staff: Lori Fleming, Management Analyst , Phone # 206-248-5518, e-mail:
Lorif@burienwa.gov**



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Las reuniones del Concejo Municipal, Consejo consultivo y el comité son accesibles a personas con discapacidades. Interpretacion de lengua de señas americana y aparatos de escucha asistida están disponibles bajo petición. Por favor de llamar al numero 206-248-5517 por lo menos 48 horas antes de la reunion para solicitar asistencia.



MINUTES - DRAFT

Burien Airport Committee

Monday, November 18, 2019 – 5:30 pm

Burien City Hall – Miller Creek Conference Room, 3rd Floor

PRESENT: Councilmember Nancy Tosta (Chair); Mayor Jimmy Matta; Larry Cripe; Jeff Harbaugh; Sharyn Parker; Debi Wagner; City Manager Brian Wilson; Management Analyst Lori Fleming.

ABSENT: Councilmember Pedro Olguin; Javier Tordable.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. APPROVE DRAFT MINUTES

The minutes from the October 15, 2019 Burien Airport Committee meeting were approved.

3. BUSINESS AGENDA

3.1 Next steps for Sea-Tac Stakeholder Advisory Round Table (StART).

Discussion occurred on what next steps are for StART. A Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) PowerPoint presentation was handed out titled *Airport/Community Noise Roundtable and FAA Support* dated March 27, 2019 which listed suggestions for a successful Roundtable. Ideas discussed included: recording meetings; Port to respond to outstanding requests; stop design work on SAMP projects; no restriction on meeting topics; collaboration on agendas and provide them in advance; annual review of facilitator; review of membership (to include Elected Officials); time to ask questions of speakers; and rewriting StART bylaws.

The Committee also discussed the possibility of having the Highline Forum become the airport forum, since it already has Elected Officials on it. A brief discussion occurred on the broader topic of what should be done to slow down growth at Sea-Tac airport.

Request for Input on Ground Noise Study:

A consultant was hired by the Port of Seattle to analyze ground noise at Sea-Tac Airport and provide recommendations for ground noise reductions. The consultant requested feedback from Burien on sources and locations of ground noise to include as part of their study. The Committee provided some suggestions and a list will be provided to the consultant.

3.2 Potential meeting with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

BAC member Debi Wagner requested a meeting with the EPA to discuss potential environmental impacts associated with Sea-Tac Airport operations and SAMP Near-Term projects. EPA responded with a letter dated November 7, 2019 and follow-up may occur after the University of Washington Mobile Observations of Ultrafine Particles (MOV-UP)

Burien Airport Committee
November 18, 2019

Study is complete at the end of the year.

3.3 Future of "Joint Airport Committee."

Discussion occurred on SeaTac and Normandy Park either reorganizing or starting their own Airport Committees. Further discussion of the future of a "Joint Airport Committee" is anticipated to occur at the Joint Meeting with Des Moines Aviation Advisory Committee on November 19, 2019 at 4:30 p.m. at the Des Moines Beach Park Dining Hall.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment that a new forum other than StART is needed.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Upcoming meetings:

The second joint meeting of the Burien Airport Committee and Des Moines Aviation Advisory Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, November 19, 2019 from 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. at the Des Moines Beach Park Dining Hall.

The next Burien Airport Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at the Burien Community Center.



4800 South 188th Street
SeaTac, WA 98188-8605
City Hall: 206.973.4800

November 27, 2019

Mark Barkley
Assistant Director, Local Government Division
Washington State Department of Commerce
P.O. Box 42525
Olympia, WA 98504-2525

Re: Seattle-Tacoma International Airport Study

Dear Mr. Barkley:

This letter is sent on behalf of the City of SeaTac City Council to express its concerns regarding the process by which the Sea-Tac Airport Study is being conducted under the management of your agency.

As you know, the City of SeaTac is funding 50% of the participating cities' share of this study and 25% of the overall project cost. This amounts to \$150,000. As elected officials, it is our responsibility to ensure the City's financial resources are being spent wisely.

Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6032 from the 2018 session clearly defines the study to be delivered to the legislature on December 1, 2019. The study deadline has already been extended once to June 1, 2020. Based on the information presented at the November 6, public meeting and current additional interviews the project consultant is proposing, the City of SeaTac is concerned that Commerce will not be able to deliver the requested detailed analysis as specified in the Scope of Work and directed by the Legislature by June 1, 2020. **The City wants full assurances from Commerce that the Study will be completed on time with the degree of thoroughness as defined in the Scope of Work.**

Additionally, we also understand the consultant project lead is located in Dallas and therefore, flies out for each TAC and public meeting. It is reasonable to assume these trips are not inexpensive. Minimizing those costs should be a goal moving forward, another reason to stick to the original proposal of having public review of a draft document, rather than inviting input prior to completion of work.

It is our understanding that at the outset, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recognized the total \$600,000 of funding would likely not be sufficient to provide the degree of thoroughness that would be desired for a study of this nature. The City of SeaTac shares that concern. **Please provide a report of the project's current budget status, a complete list of how funds have been expended to date and the amount of funds remaining to complete the study. Included in this report, the City would like a full accounting of all travel related expenses for Stantec consultants to fly from Dallas to the SeaTac area.**

Mayor
Erin Sitterley

Deputy Mayor
Clyde Hill

Councilmembers
Rick Forschler
Joel Wachtel
Peter Kwon
Takele Gobena
Pam Fernald

City Manager
Carl Cole

City Attorney
Mary Mirante Bartolo

City Clerk
Kristina Gregg

The Hospitality City

Several City Council members and SeaTac citizens attended the November 6, 2019 public meeting held in Burien. The councilmembers and citizens were frustrated with how the information was presented. More importantly, there are serious questions about Stantec's data gathering and questions about its relevancy to the airport, given the location of monitoring stations which lie outside of the clearly defined study area, as defined in section 1.1.1 in the Statement of Work document, of SeaTac, Burien, Des Moines, Tukwila, Federal Way and Normandy Park.

The City of SeaTac is concerned Stantec has strayed from the original scope of work which is a technical study on the impacts of airport operations. One noted concern is we understand Commerce and the consultant are planning to meet with certain "expert" community members in early January, prior to publication of a draft report. This study was to be technical in nature, to help inform policy and legislative activities, and, as such, the work and ultimate product should be primarily for the consumption of the participating municipalities' elected officials and staff. While certain public input is essential (i.e., through the cities' carefully chosen constituent representatives), the City believes data and facts should drive the process and results, not the court of public opinion. We believe it would be most cost-efficient for the consultant to finish a draft report and then present that document to the TAC for its review. After TAC review is complete and edits are made, then the draft should be presented to the public. Allowing additional public input before document publication would not be an effective use of limited project funds.

The City of SeaTac requests a response from Commerce to our requests in this letter by 2 p.m. December 10. In summary, we are concerned this study is not going in the right direction and we want to redirect it before further taxpayer funds are expended.



Mayor Erin Sitterley
City of SeaTac

Cc: City Council
City Manager
Airport Advisory Committee
Representative Tina Orwall
Senator Karen Keiser
Representative Mike Pellicciotti
Gary Idleburg Department of Commerce

Joint Aviation Meeting
November 19, 2019

LIST

1. Suspend design work until environmental reviews are completed.
2. Outstanding requests from cities the Port has never responded to.
3. Request for Elected participation:
 - a. Potential merge with the Highline Forum.
4. New facilitator (group owns the facilitator).
5. Audio/Visual recording of meetings (find a way).
6. Co-Equal agenda settings:
 - a. Identification of speakers.
7. Advance meeting materials.
8. Outbound messaging/PR by consensus only (consensus by Elected's).
9. Restructuring with Elected's.
10. Diverse perspective of priority (experts from both sides).
11. Intent of StART to address growth and growth of operations.
12. StART is not a vehicle to evidence engagement.
13. Concern over active participation of all stakeholders (be specific).

Joint Aviation Meeting
November 19, 2019

EDITED LIST

1. Suspend \$10 million SAMP design work undertaken without notice to StART members until pending environmental reviews of SAMP are completed.
2. Provide responses to outstanding requests from cities.
3. Amend StART Operating Procedures (“OA”) - “Membership”:
 - a. add participation of an elected representative for each city and/or;
 - b. Consider merger with the Highline Forum.
4. Amend StART OA - “Facilitator”: require annual review and approval of Facilitator by consensus of Port and city members.
5. Amend StART OA – “Feedback”: Authorize Audio/Visual recording of meetings (find a way).
6. Amend StART OA - “Meeting Agendas”: City members must be involved as co-equals with Port in initial development of agendas for each StART meeting. This shall include identification of speakers.
7. Amend StART OA “Commitment from Stakeholders” #6. Advance meeting materials – all speakers must (a) provide materials at least one week in advance, and (b) be available for questions and answers following presentations for up to the same length of time as the presentation.
8. Amend StART OA “Commitment from Stakeholders” #10: No member shall provide or publish statements about StART to the public, or to any media source or non-media entity, unless such statement is approved by consensus of StART members (including allowance for cities/electeds to review). This does not prohibit any StART member from reporting back to such member’s own appointing body.
9. Amend StART OA – “Meetings/Meeting Agendas” to reflect StART shall seek diverse perspectives, opinions, and expertise on StART topics, specifically seeking experts that provide a balance of viewpoints and contrary points of view.
10. Amend StART OA “Purpose” as follows: “Purpose: StART provides Southwest King County cities, communities, airline representatives, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Port with the opportunity to: • Support meaningful and collaborative public dialogue and engagement on airport-related operations and planned growth and development, including the SAMP; • Provide an opportunity for the communities to inform the airport-related decision making of the Port of Seattle and other Southwest King County jurisdictions/organizations; and • Raise public knowledge about the airport and impacted communities
11. Amend StART OA - New Section: Clarify that participation in StART is not to be used by any StART member as a vehicle to evidence community engagement, or lack of community engagement, in any proceeding, process, study, report, or other matter where evidence of community engagement is otherwise relevant.
12. Amend StART OA Commitment from Stakeholders #2 to require active participation of all stakeholders (be specific). Participation shall be defined to include substantively commenting and engaging during the meeting on topics presented.

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TRANSPORTATION (/TRANSPORTATION-0)

Turbulence Over Sea-Tac

State officials are actively seeking a second major airport site outside King County

BY: [BILL CONROY \(/USERS/BILL-CONROY\)](#) | FROM THE PRINT EDITION | [DECEMBER 2019 \(/DECEMBER-2019\)](#)

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Image Credit: Gene Faught

CAPACITY CRUNCH. Sea-Tac's accelerating capacity issues have prompted the creation of a state commission charged with identifying a site for a major new commercial airport by Jan. 1, 2022.

This article appears in print in the [December 2019 \(https://www.seattlebusinessmag.com/december-2019\)](https://www.seattlebusinessmag.com/december-2019) issue. [Click here for a free subscription. \(https://service.qfie.com/SBM/clsSBMNewOrd2.asp?strAspReason=102&PubCode=SBM&TrackCode=I94ED1201\)](https://service.qfie.com/SBM/clsSBMNewOrd2.asp?strAspReason=102&PubCode=SBM&TrackCode=I94ED1201)

The growth engines at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport are at full thrust, fueled by the Puget Sound region's rapidly expanding economy and population.

Those forces have spawned a worsening capacity crunch that affects the airport on many levels — including cramping its limited air and ground space, passenger terminals, jet gates and roadways as well as contributing to flight delays and swelling the lines of people cued up at security checkpoints as they try to catch flights.

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At about 2,500 acres, Sea-Tac's footprint is among the smallest of any major airport in the nation. Its three runways are never in use at the same time because of restricted airspace. More than 17% of flights through August of this year departed more than 15 minutes late, federal data shows.

The state Legislature this year passed a law mandating a search for a new airport site outside King County — either expanding existing facilities or developing a new one. Though Sea-Tac is undergoing mass construction to increase capacity, it is essentially landlocked.

“Short of condemning a lot of hotels, a cemetery and [International Boulevard], the site can't support unlimited growth,” says Bob Wallace, a real estate developer who chaired a regional planning body called the Puget Sound Air Transportation Committee (PSATC), which studied airport capacity issues back in 1992 and ultimately recommended that a third runway be built.

“It took decades of bureaucratic wrangling, litigation and ultimately the most extensive environmental mitigation of any airport in the U.S. to get the relatively innocuous and obviously vitally needed third runway built at Sea-Tac,” Wallace says.

When all was said and done, that process cost more than \$1 billion, up from an initial estimate of \$405 million.

The decision to site a new airport is made even more difficult because the two dominant airlines at Sea-Tac — locally based Alaska Air Group Inc. and Atlanta-based Delta Air Lines Inc. — are lining up on opposite sides. The two account for more than 70% of all passenger traffic at the airport. Both support making Sea-Tac as efficient as possible, but Alaska also insists that airport expansion options outside Sea-Tac must be pursued, while Delta has no interest in going that route.

Also affecting the dynamics is the difference in the airlines' business models. Alaska is the dominant domestic-flight carrier in the region and benefits from being able to offer broader service options outside Sea-Tac. Delta, however, has carved out a position as the leading international carrier at Sea-Tac — which means the airline needs to ensure convenient connecting flights for its international passengers.

Given those opposing positions, the way forward appears fraught with political landmines. But there appears to be little choice given the stakes.

Sea-Tac, now the eighth busiest airport in the nation, served nearly 50 million passengers last year, up 43% since 2013. That number is projected to exceed a staggering 66 million by 2034. Fueling that passenger growth is the four-county Puget Sound region's rapidly expanding population — now at 4.1 million and projected to reach 5.8 million by 2050, according to the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC).

The gross domestic product of the greater Seattle area, a measure of all economic activity in the region, also has exploded, expanding by 34% between 2012 and 2017 to \$357 billion, the most recent federal figures show. Reflecting that economic propulsion is the cargo growth at Sea-Tac, which skyrocketed by 48% between 2013 and 2018, to more than 432,000 metric tons.

“If we don't solve this problem, the growth continues, and what suffers is the level of service,” says Sea-Tac Managing Director Lance Lyttle. “The growth that has taken place at this airport is a direct reflection of the growth that has taken place within the region. We don't control the growth. We respond to it.”

The Washington Roundtable, in partnership with the Boston Consulting Group, recently conducted a transportation forecast study for the Puget Sound region that included a focus on airports. Among its preliminary findings: Even after accounting for scheduled expansion plans at Sea-Tac, maximum operating capacity will be reached by 2029 — leading to a 750% increase in delay hours and about \$24 billion in negative economic impact by 2040.

“Business leaders are increasingly expressing serious concerns that congestion and delay at Sea-Tac airport are affecting their businesses,” says Steve Mullin, president of the Washington Roundtable, whose board is comprised of senior executives from Washington state's major private-sector employers. This concern is not limited to central Puget Sound.

“One of our members from the Tri-Cities told me recently that lack of predictability at Sea-Tac airport is having a tangible effect on his business,” Mullin says, “because employees have to assume that they will miss their connections for the most convenient and efficient itineraries.”

Suzanne Fletcher-Juneau, a Seattle-based senior associate with the global travel consultancy Inform Logistics and past president of the Puget Sound Business Travel Association, says the combination of Boeing, Amazon and Microsoft alone generated an estimated

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\$650 million in air-travel spending last year.

“However, we must remember air spend is just a piece of the pie,” she says. “The impact of delays and layovers can cost companies millions of dollars.”

One example of how Sea-Tac’s operations touch other elements of the Seattle economy beyond business air travel can be found in the city’s cruise-ship industry. Perry Cooper, spokesperson for Sea-Tac, says about 70% of the Seattle area’s more than 1 million annual cruise visitors go through Sea-Tac.

But determining the future of Sea-Tac and aviation services in the Puget Sound region is about more than money and economic impact, says Josh Brown, executive director of the PSRC. The quality of life in the region also is at stake.

“It’s not just about businesses,” Brown says. “It’s also about taking the kids to Disneyland or visiting grandma. We all want to be able to do the things that help us live great lives, so this is a shared challenge we have in terms of the solution part.”



EXPLOSIVE GROWTH. Sea-Tac Managing Director Lance Lyttle oversees the nation’s eighth busiest airport, with some 50 million passengers served last year, up 43% since 2013. Photo by Hayley Young

Sea-Tac currently has about 100 capital-improvement projects in the pipeline that will cost an estimated \$3.7 billion during the next five years, Cooper says. The roster of capital projects includes the \$658.3 million renovation of the airport’s North Satellite facility; the development of a \$968 million International Arrivals Facility; and the \$17 million renovation of the Central Terminal to add dining, retail and seating space. All three projects are slated to be completed between the summer of 2020 and the spring of 2021. But they represent only the tip of the iceberg.

Phase 1 of Sea-Tac’s Sustainable Airport Master Plan (SAMP) is now under environmental review and calls for 30 additional projects that are slated to be completed or under construction by 2027, including a new 19-gate airport terminal. The price tag for those projects, Cooper says, is another \$4.5 billion — for a grand total of some \$8.2 billion in capital and SAMP projects. Funding for the slew of projects will come from a combination of revenue bonds, airline and passenger fees, and federal grants.

Shane Jones, vice president of airport affairs and development at Alaska Airlines, says the airline believes Sea-Tac’s current airport master plan is not the right one for the region, however. That plan, Jones adds, calls for spending \$2.3 billion to develop a 19-gate terminal on a site disconnected from the existing main terminal — requiring “passengers connecting between terminals to exit security and take a bus.” Jones adds that it would “serve as an expensive aircraft parking lot, with tarmac delays of more than an hour during busy periods of the travel day and more than three hours in poor weather conditions.”

Alaska instead favors a different approach at Sea-Tac, he says, “namely adding gates to the main terminal, and ensuring new gates are connected to the main terminal and inside security, and improving the overall experience of travelers at check-in, security and

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throughout the main terminal concourses.” Alaska also supports the state-led effort to find airport alternatives outside Sea-Tac.

“Even with the addition of new gates, airspace and runway constraints will continue to dictate the maximum number of aircraft that can feasibly serve Sea-Tac,” Jones says. “We need to be thinking about long-term viable solutions to accommodate the growth, including the potential for secondary airports in the Puget Sound region.”



GLOBAL REACH: Sea-Tac is expanding its international muscle with the construction of a \$968 million International Arrivals Facility, a multilevel complex slated to open next year that will expand the number of gates that can accommodate international wide-body airplanes from 12 to 20. Photo by Gene Faught

Delta, by contrast, prefers to expand Sea-Tac's capacity to handle growth during the next 15 years — the period covered by the SAMP.

“The best way to address current and future needs is to continue moving forward as quickly as possible with the Port's Sustainable Airport Master Plan, which will increase the number of gates at the airport and help to accommodate future growth as well as the growth the region has experienced over the last few years,” says Liz Savadelis, spokesperson for Delta Air Lines. “We are not looking for another airport for our operations.”

Another slate of Sea-Tac projects is expected to be identified in Phase 2 of the SAMP that will be designed to address longer-term airport capacity needs. Planning for Phase 2 is scheduled to begin after the completion of a major regional aviation-baseline study now underway by the PSRC — a study being funded by a \$1.6 million grant from the Federal Aviation Administration. The so-called baseline study is designed to provide a “clear picture of the aviation activities and needs” in the Puget Sound region through 2050, with a final report scheduled to be published in the fall of 2020.

Some of the initial data from the PSRC study has already been released. It shows that even with completion of the long-term SAMP projects — which are projected to increase total aircraft gates to 113, up from the current 83 — Sea-Tac “will not be able to meet the region's 2050 demand for passenger air service.”

“Two years ago, the FAA approached the PSRC because they began to see trends with the enormous growth happening at Sea-Tac that at some point were going to be impacting the nation's airport system,” Brown says. “And for the FAA, when they get into a position where a metropolitan region, an airport, begins to impact the national system, it's their responsibility to manage that. And there's two ways to do that.”

Brown says one way is to institute what's known as “slot control,” where the FAA determines how many planes can take off and land at the airport at any given time. “The other thing that the FAA can do is to begin the process working with communities to think about what can be done to solve the problem.”

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Courtney Gregoire, a Port of Seattle commissioner who also is assistant general counsel for Microsoft's Digital Crimes Unit, adds that the capacity problem, left unaddressed, will lead to higher flight prices at Sea-Tac, too, because of the demand and supply imbalance. "You will see a diminished ability for many people to travel, to see family, or to go on that lifelong family vacation, or to travel for work as a small-business owner," she says.

The state legislation enacted this past spring seeks to address Sea-Tac's growing capacity crunch by establishing a new state commission composed of representatives from government, business and the community appointed by the governor. The commission is charged with coming up with a short list of six preferred locations for developing a new airport outside King County by Jan. 1, 2021. That list must be narrowed down to a single preferred location by Jan. 1, 2022.

"We just don't have the capacity in King County to build it," says Washington state Sen. Karen Keiser, who co-sponsored the enabling legislation. Keiser is a Democrat representing the 33rd District, which encompasses parts of Burien, Normandy Park, SeaTac, Kent and Des Moines — all communities located near Sea-Tac International Airport that are most affected by the airport's operations. "This is not a study," Keiser says. "We're not doing any more studies. This is a decision-making process that is laid out in legislation."

In Washington, however, regional decision-making processes can take decades to play out. The third runway recommended by the PSATC in 1992, for example, wasn't completed until 2008 — in large measure because of environmental hurdles and a lengthy court battle waged by runway opponents.

At the time, the PSATC also recommended that commercial airline services be added at Paine Field by 2000 and that a new commercial airport be developed south of Seattle, either at what is now Joint Base Lewis-McChord near Tacoma or "in the Loveland area of Pierce County or in the Olympia/Black Lake area of Thurston County." Paine Field service was finally launched this year, but the proposed new commercial airport never took off.

Keiser notes that the ultimate solution coming from the recently established airport-siting commission could be a build-out of a current airport, a brand-new airport or "a series of different aviation facilities, maybe one dedicated to air cargo — those are all possibilities." The last major new airport developed in the United States, Denver International Airport, which opened in 1995, cost \$4.8 billion to build — or about \$8.1 billion in 2019 dollars.

The Puget Sound region is home to 29 airports, ranging from the behemoth Sea-Tac to smaller regional facilities like the Auburn and Renton municipal airports, King County's Boeing Field and Olympia Regional Airport in Thurston County. Statewide there are nearly 140 public-use airports, the bulk of them community, local service and rural airports, according to a guide published by the Washington State Department of Transportation.

One problem with respect to Keiser's suggestion of potentially developing a dedicated air-cargo airport is the fact that about a third of all cargo — and 45% of international cargo — is carried in the bellies of commercial passenger jets. The balance is handled by freight aircraft. So, moving cargo services from Sea-Tac to a dedicated cargo airport would require rethinking logistics, given a cargo pallet may come into the country on freight carrier and then be transferred to the belly of a passenger aircraft for delivery elsewhere in the country, for example.

On another front, Snohomish County's Paine Field, which currently has one terminal with two gates that can accommodate 24 commercial aircraft departures per day, has been mentioned as a possible site for future passenger-service expansion. But it also is home to a Boeing assembly plant and has plenty of other business on its plate already, says Airport Director Arif Ghouse.

"Paine Field hosts a diverse range of operations, including major aircraft manufacturing and maintenance, general aviation, flying schools, aviation colleges, museums, tours and now commercial passenger service," Ghouse says. "With the start in March 2019, the county remains focused on ensuring the successful operation of current levels of commercial passenger service."

Another proposal involves Grant County International Airport, located east of the Cascade Range near Moses Lake. Rich Mueller, the airport director, and Jeffrey Bishop, the former executive director of the Port of Moses Lake, which oversees the airport, confirm that port officials have lobbied state legislators to encourage them to consider Grant County International, which boasts five runways, as a potential location for international flights, or possibly as an air-cargo center.

The plan, however, includes a proposal to build a high-speed rail line through the mountains that would connect the airport near Moses Lake with Seattle, which is about 190 miles away. Wallace says the Grant County airport idea "was pushed heavily by anti-Sea-Tac forces" in the third-runway debate in the 1990s.

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“High-speed rail is probably a pipe dream for a number of economic and physical reasons,” he adds. “Can you imagine a Microsoft road warrior taking a red-eye from Dubai or Sydney, arriving at Moses Lake, waiting an hour or two for a train to Seattle, then spending another hour or so on a train? It would be the best economic-development gift we could send Portland and Vancouver, British Columbia.”



GRAND HALL. The new International Arrivals Facility at Sea-Tac will feature a 450,000-square-foot grand hall for baggage claim and customs processing. Photo by Gene Faught

Still, the Port of Moses Lake's lobbying earned it a seat on the new state airport-siting commission, which has 15 voting members.

The ultimate decisions made about airport expansion and development carry enormous implications for the two major airlines riding Sea-Tac's growth wave: Alaska and Delta. Some perspective on their respective business models helps explain their divergent views. Between 2009 and 2018, Alaska's overall Sea-Tac passenger count has jumped 61%, from 15 million to 24.1 million — the bulk of that domestic flight service.

Delta's overall passenger growth at Sea-Tac during the same period skyrocketed sixfold, from 1.9 million to 11.5 million passengers served. Delta's international-service growth at Sea-Tac is particularly impressive. Delta wasn't even ranked among the top 10 airlines providing international service at Sea-Tac in 2009. Last year, Delta ranked first, with 1.7 million international passengers served and a 31.3% market share — with Sea-Tac being a key Pacific gateway hub to lucrative international markets, particularly Asia.

One industry expert, who asked not to be named, describes the situation like this: An expansion of aviation services outside Sea-Tac offers Alaska more options to serve its customers, such as its expansion earlier this year to Paine Field in Snohomish County 25 miles north of Seattle. And it also helps the airline consolidate its domestic competitive advantage at Sea-Tac by siphoning off future competition there.

By contrast, for Delta's international flights at Sea-Tac to thrive, the airline depends on those travelers having ease of access to connecting flights. For many international travelers, Sea-Tac is not the final destination but rather a middle point on the way to another destination. Consequently, it's not in Delta's business interest to make connecting flights more difficult, and it would likely lose international travelers if they are forced to travel to another airport for connecting flights.

“The politics, the community impacts, are very real. If you live very close to Sea-Tac International Airport, why do you disproportionately bear the noise, the potential health impacts from pollution for our entire state's benefit?” Gregoire asks. “How do we both all enjoy the benefits and maybe more equitably share the burdens? I would say that is a big part of the conversation that says: Where else can some of this traffic go across the state?”

[\(/#facebook\)](#)

https://www.seattlebusinessmag.com/transportation/turbulence-over-sea-tac?fbclid=IwAR3wOKZoWCfZKTLsej1RSu__m6N_qDIPdFiATKLWltiH4wAu... 6/7

Alaska Airlines says Sea-Tac Airport expansion could worsen congestion

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BY MYNORTHWEST STAFF
NOVEMBER 26, 2019 AT 3:43 PM

(KIRO 7)

The Sea-Tac Airport \$2.3 billion expansion is partly being done in an effort to mitigate the rapidly increasing foot and vehicle traffic, but according to Alaska Airlines, the plan has critical issues and will potentially increase congestion.

The airport is looking to launch an automated security process in the future along with 19 additional gates and a second terminal, among other expansions.

But Alaska officials believe the plan for a 19-gate terminal would utterly disconnect passengers from the rest of the airport's core operations, thereby frustrating passengers and making it one of the most congested airports in the U.S., [reports the Puget Sound Business Journal](#).

In 2018, approximately 50 million people passed took flight to or from Sea-Tac, and 60 percent more planes are expected to land there by 2034.

"This isolated terminal would require passengers moving between terminals to use a bus or automated people mover to reach the other terminal, as well as go through separate security screening in each terminal, severely challenging flight connections and passenger convenience," said Shane Jones, Alaska's vice president of airport real estate and development in a letter to Sea-Tac.

Alaska Airlines also contends that Sea-Tac Airport is not on land big enough to sustain the expansion for a major airport, citing airports like Dallas-Fort Worth Airport (on 20,000 acres) and Denver International Airport (on 40,000). Sea-Tac sits on 2,500 acres of property.

"It would be misguided to bring all 19 gates online in 2027 with no plan to increase the capacity of the airfield or surrounding airspace," [the Alaska Airlines letter went on to say](#).

In response to the Alaska Airlines claim, the Port Of Seattle released the following statement last week:

“As a public agency, we are tasked with making investments in public infrastructure that meet the needs of the region and all airlines. Sea-Tac Airport is an asset of statewide significance and planning for how it can accommodate the growth of region requires that we address the needs of all stakeholders. Alaska is a great partner, and we are proud to have them as our hometown carrier. However, the assertion that the proposed new terminal, currently under environmental review, would lack connectivity to the rest of the airport is factually incorrect. There are many options for connectivity, and the final decision on all projects will be made by the Port Commission.”

Pilot union at Horizon Air blames management for ‘deteriorated’ safety programs, highlighting distrustful relations

Seattle Times Dec. 6, 2019 at 5:03 pm Updated Dec. 6, 2019 at 5:51 pm

By

[Dominic Gates](#)

Seattle Times aerospace reporter

The union representing pilots at Horizon Air, the regional carrier for Alaska Airlines, sent a note to its members Thursday alleging that the airline’s management is undermining long-standing industry safety programs by focusing on penalizing individuals.

The note includes a link to a letter the union wrote this summer to the board of directors of Alaska Air Group and CEO Brad Tilden drawing attention to “the deteriorated state of Horizon Air’s safety programs.”

Pilot unions and airline management typically work closely together to ensure safety. Yet the union’s July letter, obtained by The Seattle Times along with the Thursday note and earlier union documents, reveals a severely distrustful relationship at Horizon between management and its pilots.

The union’s Thursday message was in reaction to a Seattle Times story that day highlighting an internal memo to senior pilot leaders, in which John Hornibrook, Horizon Air’s vice president of flight operations, expressed [concern about a lax safety culture among the airline’s pilots and listed a series of incidents in the couple of days before Thanksgiving](#) that he deemed unsafe.

Hornibrook wrote that “if we sit back and do nothing, we will have an accident.”

In response, the executive council of the Airlines Professional Association Teamsters Local 1224 that represents Horizon pilots told its members that “we are truly dismayed by the presumptive nature, negative attitude and broad-brush descriptions of our Horizon pilots.” It said the incidents listed by Hornibrook “are not often the result of pilot error or unprofessionalism.”

The Teamsters message points to the letter the union wrote to CEO Tilden and the Alaska Air board in July with specific concerns alleging that management at Horizon was undermining a key safety program called FOQA (Flight Operations Quality Assurance, pronounced FO-KWA) that is designed to spot and remedy any dangerous trends in flight operations.

Tilden responded in July with a letter saying that the union’s concerns “are being taken seriously.” He set up a meeting between pilot union representatives and Horizon’s then-CEO Gary Beck, which took place on Oct. 4. The union said a “dialog was started” with a follow-up meeting planned before year end.

Since then, Beck has moved over to a senior position at Alaska Airlines, and was replaced last month at Horizon by Joe Sprague. The union’s letter to its members said that given the leadership change and the Hornibrook memo, “we may be starting again at square one.”

The Teamsters union did not respond to a request for comment Friday. Alaska Air Group spokeswoman Bobbie Egan flatly denied the union’s allegation that it abuses the safety program designed to monitor the airline’s flight activities.

The FOQA program “operates in accordance with FAA guidance to increase the level of safety across the entire operation,” she wrote in an email.

Trust and openness

The dispute over assessment of pilots between the union and management centers on the balance between encouraging an open safety culture and holding individuals accountable for mistakes.

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The FOQA system, implemented across the airline industry and administered by an external company, automatically gathers data from every flight and flags any unusual conditions such as excessive speed, stalls or engine problems. This data is compiled and analyzed and used to spot trends that indicate any safety or maintenance issue and to inform pilots through training or sending out alerts.

At each carrier, a FOQA team of senior pilots from both union and management collaborates to analyze the data for that specific airline and to disseminate to its pilots any needed alerts and actions. Crucially, though the FOQA team may describe a specific incident, unless it is very egregious they don’t identify the individual pilots involved.

This is a guiding principle in U.S. aviation: The belief is that it's safer to encourage pilots to be open about errors and report them, without fear that they will be penalized for doing so — so they don't conceal mistakes or problems.

Each FOQA team has union pilot “gatekeepers” who have access to the identities of the individuals involved; if an incident is outside the norm, they will talk to the pilots about what happened. If a safety incident is serious enough, pilots can be penalized or terminated. But outside that, the FOQA data almost always remains anonymous to encourage openness and trust.

A senior captain with Alaska Airlines, who contacted The Seattle Times after Thursday's story, described how it works by citing how, following a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) directive in 2002 on Boeing 737s, Alaska specified that its pilots shouldn't deploy the spoilers on the wings at speeds greater than 270 knots.

The following month, Alaska posted FOQA data for its pilots showing 45 instances that month when this rule was breached, mostly just for a matter of seconds, though in a few cases for longer. After this alert to pilots, “the next month it went down to one incident,” he said.

The FOQA system is “not something punitive,” the captain said. “It's about seeing trends and doing something about it.”

Toxic relationship

The Teamsters July letter to the board alleges that after a “safety-critical event” in the summer of 2018, which is not detailed further, Horizon management “maliciously and improperly used protected (FOQA) information” against the pilots involved. As a result of this breach of protocol, the entire FOQA team, both union and company representatives, resigned, the union said. The letter calls this action “unprecedented in the history of the airline.”

The letter alleges that in multiple communications to Horizon's pilots, Hornibrook overrode the decisions of the FOQA gatekeepers and improperly used protected FOQA data that “admonished, embarrassed and misled Horizon pilots.” It cites a couple of instances when management in pilot training classes described safety incidents and identified the crew.

The union called such conduct “unprofessional” and said it will “cause the undermining of trust” and is “counter-productive to the safety of Horizon Air.”

Alaska Air's Egan denied the union's assertions.

"No protections have been removed from our FOQA program," she said.

Regarding the "safety-critical event" in 2018, she said "the company had no insight into who the crew was."

"FOQA is critical to our safety program," Egan wrote. "We have never, and will never, take punitive action against a pilot due to FOQA identified events."

Another Alaska Airlines pilot wrote to The Times after Thursday's story expressing concern about how the rapid expansion of the U.S. airline industry has resulted in an influx of new, less-experienced pilots at regional airlines across the country. He called it "a ticking time bomb."

"I fear we are getting dangerously close to seeing accidents involving regional airlines caused by a combination of lack of experience and complacency," he wrote.

That's the background to Hornibrook's push to "get the pilots heads in the game before we have an accident," as he put it in his memo. Yet antagonism with the pilot union could limit progress.

One Horizon pilot, who like the others interviewed for this story asked to be anonymous to protect his job, said the relationship with Horizon management is now "toxic" in some respects.

The Teamsters union's concerns at Horizon are longstanding. In a January newsletter to members, it laid out the same complaints about management abuse of FOQA data.

That newsletter notes, however, that both the union and the company agree on the desired outcome: "upholding the highest degree of safety is not negotiable."

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Flight operations chief at Horizon Air raises alarm over pilots' safety culture

Seattle Times Dec. 5, 2019 at 5:00 am Updated Dec. 7, 2019 at 7:56 am

By

[Dominic Gates](#)

Seattle Times aerospace reporter

In an urgent internal message on the eve of Thanksgiving, Horizon Air's head of flight operations warned that a lax safety culture among the airline's pilots had led to multiple potentially dangerous incidents in recent days. He called for urgent action to prevent a serious air accident.

"We should be very uncomfortable with what has happened over the past two days," wrote captain John Hornibrook, Horizon Air's vice president of flight operations, in a Nov. 27 email message to handful of top managers and pilot leaders. "If we sit back and do nothing, we will have an accident. Nothing good can come of the trajectory we are currently on."

"We do need to use the past 48 hours as a (wake-up) call before we have a more serious event," added Hornibrook, who oversees about 800 pilots flying to more than 45 cities for the regional airline owned by Seattle-based Alaska Air Group. "The leadership team needs to get the pilots heads in the game before we have an accident."

The incidents Hornibrook listed ranged from pilots going over the airspeed limits to aircraft approaching a stall, and also included weather-induced threats that perhaps could have been avoided.

Though the email suggests some alarm about pilot safety standards, in an interview Wednesday both Hornibrook and Horizon president Joe Sprague downplayed its significance and declared it a sign of Horizon's high safety standards.

"The memo was meant to respond to the spike we saw in irregular events," said Hornibrook. "I'm not sitting back and waiting for something bigger ... I

wanted everybody to take a pause, take a hard look at what was going on, refocus, and get back to the Safety First philosophy.”

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Sprague added that “a safe airline recognizes a spike and takes proactive action.”

“That’s a positive from a safety culture standpoint,” he said. “Horizon is a safe airline. This internal communication was a good sign of that.”

In contrast, a Horizon pilot — who declined to be identified out of fear of losing his job — said he thought the memo was “incredibly melodramatic” and evidence of a disconnect between Horizon management and its pilot cadre.

A litany of safety incidents

Horizon Air pilots fly Bombardier Q400 turboprops and Embraer E175 jets on routes that link smaller cities into a feeder network for Alaska Airlines.

The only serious accident in the airline’s passenger service was in 1988, when a De Havilland Canada DHC-8 — a precursor model to the Q400 — crash-landed at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport after an engine fire. Four passengers suffered serious injuries.

In Dec. 2017, another Horizon Q400 inadvertently landed on a taxiway instead of the runway at Pullman in eastern Washington. The taxiway was unoccupied and the aircraft rolled out without further incident.

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The only fatality on one of Horizon’s planes came in August 2018 when one of the airline’s ground-crew employees, [Richard Russell, stole a Q400, then crashed the plane](#) into a wooded area of Ketron Island in south Puget Sound, killing himself.

In 2017, [a major pilot shortage at Horizon caused hundreds of flight cancellations](#). In response, Horizon raised pay, added signing bonuses and boosted recruitment. Since then, there’s been an influx of new, young pilots.

As major U.S. airlines have begun to expand rapidly since then, more experienced pilots have jumped to those much higher-paying jobs. As a result, all regional airlines are finding it harder to hold onto experienced pilots. This year, 90 longer-serving pilots have upgraded from Horizon to Alaska Airlines.

An Alaska Airlines pilot who moved up from Horizon said that while the vast majority of the pilots hired are very professional, Horizon has been forced by the shortage and the competition for pilots to recruit people with only the minimum flying experience. “They are hiring people they would not have hired 10 years ago,” he said.

Sprague said that Horizon’s pilots have average experience of about 3,000 flight hours, twice the minimum required by the FAA to fly for an airline. The average time for Horizon captains who command aircraft is more than 4,000 flight hours, he said. They are “a very professional group of qualified pilots,” he said.

Still, Hornibrook’s email cited the two days before Thanksgiving as “the most difficult 48-hour period I have seen in my tenure with Horizon Air” and listed a series of safety-related incidents.

One aircraft had exceeded its maximum operating speed. Another had exceeded the maximum speed allowed with the wing flaps deployed. Exceeding those speeds for an extended period would stress and damage the airframe.

“We have set speed limits of 10 knots below any maximum speed and this rule needs to be followed,” Hornibrook wrote.

He wrote that pilots need to be reminded that anytime the pilot flying the plane lowers the flaps or the landing gear, the co-pilot must say “speed check” to ensure such a check is done. And he urged his team to remind pilots of the speed limitations, particularly coming in on the Q400 turboprop airplanes at an altitude of around 8,000 feet when speed is supposed to drop in case of bird strikes.

In other incidents he cited, two pilots had experienced “stick shakers,” a noisy vibration of the control column that warns pilots the plane is close to a stall.

And one flight out of Paine Field in Everett had discovered a 4.5-ton discrepancy in weight after take-off. Pilots must enter the total weight of their aircraft — including passengers and luggage — into the flight control computer before take-off because the weight affects the plane’s performance. It determines, for example, how quickly the plane could climb away if the pilot had to abort a landing at the last minute or how much runway it will need to come to a stop.

“Thank god this airplane was 9000 pounds under weight and not the other way around,” Hornibrook wrote.

In addition, in the same two days, pilots had failed to avoid dangerous weather. One flew into severe turbulence near Palm Springs and two more aircraft were hit by lightning strikes. Hornibrook ended his litany of safety incidents by noting that one passenger was transported to the hospital after falling on the ramp in Spokane.

“We have a problem. Most of these mistakes could have been prevented if our crews would have followed process,” Hornibrook wrote, adding that stick shakers and excessive speed “are caused by the pilot’s lack of attention to the state of the aircraft.”

Penalizing pilots

Apologizing for sending out such a downbeat message the day before Thanksgiving, Hornibrook said the situation was dire enough that he didn’t feel it could wait until a mandatory meeting already scheduled for Dec. 9 “on safety and the current culture of our pilot group.”

The Horizon Air pilot who spoke anonymously said he and his peers work hard to fly the planes according to procedures and with “good airmanship.” He said standards are high enough that about 5-to-10% of those inducted into Horizon’s training program flunk out and never become line pilots.

And he said none of the incidents listed by Hornibrook “struck me as on the precipice of a disaster.”

He said no pilot would intentionally fly into severe turbulence or lightning and that most such encounters are not the fault of the pilot.

And he said pilots provide only some of the data for the calculation of the plane’s weight. They have little control over other input supplied by flight attendants and baggage handlers, with no ability to cross-check the final number that’s sent to them electronically.

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The pilot also questioned Hornibrook’s citing of incidents of excessive speed, saying that slight overspeeds for short periods are not uncommon and not very significant. He said Horizon changed its policy so that any pilot exceeding 10 knots below the posted limit is now penalized, even though a gust of wind or

wake turbulence could easily increase air speed by more than 10 knots and lead to a momentary overspeed.

“You cannot start penalizing pilots for flying the aircraft in a normal state,” the pilot said.

A veteran captain with Alaska Airlines backed up the Horizon pilot’s account. He said airplane manufacturers have built in a margin of around 15 knots beyond the posted limit, and that going a few knots over the posted limit for a few seconds “happens routinely and is in general not a big deal.”

When it does happen, never intentionally, the relevant overspeed data has to be reported after landing, and the maintenance technicians then take a look. Usually, depending on the altitude and flight condition when the speed passed the limit, no action is needed, the Alaska captain said.

On the evidence of Hornibrook’s memo however, Horizon management is feeling the need to tighten control over pilot performance.

He urged the pilot leadership team to sit in the jumpseat whenever possible when flying Horizon so they could point out to the flight crew any mistakes and “remind the pilots to strictly adhere to procedures.”

“Our pilot group needs to be more professional and this team needs to hold the pilots accountable,” Hornibrook wrote. “I am concerned we continue to make these mistakes as a group.”

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CITY OF BURIEN, WASHINGTON

RESOLUTION NO. 405

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BURIEN, WASHINGTON,
AMENDING RESOLUTION NO. 384 ESTABLISHING A COMMITTEE
TO ADDRESS ISSUES RELATED TO SEATTLE TACOMA
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.**

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Burien adopted Resolution No. 384 on December 19, 2016 which created a committee to address issues related to Seattle Tacoma International Airport (hereafter “Airport”); and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to change the composition of the committee to allow for better participation;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BURIEN, WASHINGTON, DOES RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Amendment. Resolution Number 384 is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 1. Committee Established. A Burien Airport Committee (“Committee”) is hereby established to act in an advisory capacity to the City Council with the following purposes:

1. To discuss both the positive and the negative impacts of the Airport on the City of Burien;
2. To discuss land use issues related to the Airport, including impacts on the City of Burien, including but not limited to the South Aviation Support Area (SASA), the International Arrivals Facility, and Airport access;
3. To discuss agreements between the City of Burien and the Port of Seattle related to the Airport including, but not limited to interlocal agreements;
4. To discuss mitigation of Airport impacts including but not limited to traffic mitigation, surface water management, parking, and the payment of impact fees;
5. To make recommendations to the City Council regarding ways to protect residents and businesses from negative Airport impacts;
6. To make recommendations to the City Council regarding ways for residents and businesses to take advantage of positive Airport impacts proximity;
7. To ensure coordination and information sharing among the individuals representing the City of Burien on various Airport-related committees, task-forces, and other entities;
8. To be informed on regional airport studies; and
9. To address other Airport related issues as deemed appropriate by the Committee or the City Council.

Section 2. Meetings. The Committee will meet monthly or on an as-needed basis.

Section 3. Committee Composition. The Committee shall be comprised of the following:

1. Three Councilmembers, one of which shall be the Chair. Councilmembers ~~and the Chair~~ of the Committee shall be selected by random drawing if more than three express interest in serving.
2. ~~A maximum of three members from the Burien business community, who shall be appointed by the Council. Business community members shall serve two year terms.~~
3. ~~A maximum of three members who reside in the City of Burien shall be appointed by the Council. Resident members shall serve two year terms.~~
2. A maximum of six members representing residents and businesses of the Burien community, who shall be appointed by the Council to serve two-year terms.
3. The City Manager shall serve as an Ex-Officio member.

Section 4. Staff Liaison. The City Manager shall appoint a staff liaison to the Committee. The Committee shall also have additional staff support as the City Manager deems appropriate.

Section 5. Committee Meetings Open to the Public. All Committee meetings shall be open to the public pursuant to the Washington State Open Public Meetings Act, RCW 42.30 et seq.

Section 2. Effective Date. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage by the Burien City Council.

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BURIEN, WASHINGTON, AT A REGULAR MEETING THEREOF THIS 28 DAY OF January, 2019.

CITY OF BURIEN


Jimmy Matta, Mayor

ATTEST/AUTHENTICATED:


Monica Lusk, City Clerk

Approved as to form:



Lisa Marshall, City Attorney

Filed with the City Clerk: *January 28, 2019*
Passed by the City Council: *January 28, 2019*
Resolution No. 405