



City of Des Moines

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January 30, 2018

Puget Sound Regional Council
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500
Seattle, Washington 98104-1035

RE: Regional Transportation Plan Comments on the Regional Transportation Plan

Puget Sound Regional Council,

The City of Des Moines appreciates the important work of the Puget Sound Regional Council and the opportunity to comment on the Draft of the Regional Transportation Plan - 2018.

The draft plan acknowledges the importance of a sustainable regional transportation network moving people and goods in ways that support a healthy environment and a strong economy. The plan also recognizes the opportunity to address past harms to the environment and improve air and water quality. The City of Des Moines is committed to multi-modal options.

The City of Des Moines comments relate primarily to the section of the plan devoted to the regional aviation system and planning for future airport system needs (pg.53-54).

Washington is the most trade dependent state in the nation and Washington airports undeniably have a significant impact on the State's economy. [1] The plan is deficient in the discussion of this critical element of the state's transportation system, devoting a brief half page to this topic.

The primary concern of the City of Des Moines has to do with the asymmetrical relationship between the public benefit of economic activity coming from airport operations (specifically SeaTac International Airport) and the disproportionate negative impacts experienced by our city in proximity to this major airport. We understand the plan addresses the statewide transportation system, nonetheless SeaTac is the largest component in the statewide aviation system.

It is state policy to work with appropriate local and regional authorities to begin the process of siting a second large commercial airport in western Washington.

1. The 2012 Aviation Economic Impact Study estimated that, 'the total impact of airport-related activity included approximately 250,000 jobs, \$15.3 billion in wages and \$51 billion in total economic activity. The study also stated that more than \$790 million in tax revenue came from airport's economic impact, with \$550 million going to the State and \$250 million distributed to local jurisdictions; cities, counties and special purpose districts.'

We are supportive of the plan's discussion related to the State taking the lead in addressing capacity needs, including by funding a site selection study for the placement of new airports(s), and placing a priority on funding and planning the state's air transportation system (pg. 54).

The plan section related to maximizing aviation capacity within the existing regional airport system before constructing new airports, should be modified to require that the disproportionate impacts experienced by Des Moines residents and surrounding communities are primary considerations in the decision to move toward siting a new international airport within the region (pg. 54).

Additionally, the impacts of SeaTac in terms of mobility, connectivity and multi-modal accessibility to and from the airport is problematic and remains largely unaddressed. The complexity of the regional transportation systems and often ineffective regional planning for transportation is part of the difficulty in addressing transport concerns.

SeaTac is growing rapidly and the plan needs to provide guidance to assure that multi-modal options are the standard for addressing airport growth. Constraints on the capacity of the regional transportation grid to absorb millions of more passengers and tons of cargo must be seen as signaling consideration of new airport facilities that will relieve congestion, not simply add to it. The integration of the state aviation system into regional transportation planning is essential to the accommodation of future demand at SeaTac and elsewhere.

Without adequate access, the economic potential from aviation is constrained and the impacts to local residents become increasingly unfair.

Sustainability must be central to any discussion of the effectiveness and functionality of the state transportation system, including the aviation system. As you know, the classic definition of sustainability comes from the 1987 Brundtland Report, defining sustainable development as, 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

We strongly object to the absence of any discussion related to sustainability and air and water quality related to airport system needs, particularly related to maximizing existing airport capacity before constructing new airports. Sustainability, air, and water quality must be critical considerations in the decision to site new airports. The following policies from Vision 2040 support the inclusion of these considerations related to air system planning:

MPP-T-7: Develop a transportation system that minimizes negative impacts to human health.

MPP-T-5: Foster a less polluting system that reduces the negative effects of transportation infrastructure and operation on the climate and natural environment.

MPP-T-20: Design transportation facilities to fit within the context of the built or natural environments in which they are located.

The ability to implement sustainable measures to protect the natural environment, human health, mitigate noise and understand any adverse health impacts of jet fuel emissions, etc. is an essential constraint on future airport capacity and expansion. Without the ability to implement sustainable measures, future SeaTac airport growth in both operations and capacity, should be constrained.

Additionally, the City requests that discussion of the City of Des Moines' potential for a passenger ferry terminal be added to the section related to the ferry system (pg. 50). The City is actively working on potential passenger ferry service to Seattle and Tacoma. The City's proximity to light rail and a fast-growing employment base serve to make passenger ferry service in Des Moines a viable alternative mode of transportation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this planning document, and for serious consideration of the City's comments and concerns. We look forward to the opportunity to continue this discussion on behalf of all of our residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt Pina". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "P".

Matt Pina
Mayor