

**PART 3**

**BACKGROUND**

**chapter 3.1**

**sea-tac communities plan  
background**

### 3.1.0 BACKGROUND

In 1942, the Civil Aeronautics Administration (now the FAA) selected an airport site near swampy Bow Lake. Since neither King County nor the City of Seattle had adequate funds for such a project, the Port of Seattle acquired the original 906 acres and developed the Airport. It's southwest King County situation was desirable since it was close to midway between Puget Sound's two major cities, Seattle and Tacoma. It's pastoral rural setting promised distance from city congestions, and less impact on a sparsely settled, countrified atmosphere.

Sea-Tac's early scale of operations was overshadowed by its area predecessor, nearby Boeing Field. It was not until the advent of the jet age, with its pursuant needs of longer runways and generally enlarged facilities, that the booming airline industry shifted its local focus to Sea-Tac. In the meantime, the Airport's surrounding land character had undergone considerable change.

The area's proximity to manufacturing in south Seattle and Renton was a substantial factor in its rapid postwar growth, which continued through the early 1960's. With land use controls and environmental concerns less sophisticated than today, the accelerating urbanization of the area took its toll in water and air pollution, land use conflicts, traffic inadequacies and visual blight. Opportunities for commercial ventures, centered on the Airport and its surrounding populations, tended to contribute to shortsighted community development rather than more reasoned, long-term

considerations. Changes in the area's basically single-family character were sometimes sudden and, to the homeowner, appeared to threaten the integrity of its residential make-up.

The introduction of large jets to an already burgeoning air industry pushed the airlines and most airports onto a whole new threshold of operations. The tides of postwar affluence pitched this new mode of air travel to the limits of many an American airport's capabilities, including Sea-Tac's. The Port responded to meet the challenge, by then confirming the vast opportunities a major airport can bring to a region's economic markets. The Port expanded the Airport to 1500 acres, then 2,200 acres, extending runways and expanding terminal and other support facilities.

Technology increased the jet's size, enabling payloads to double and triple but also ushering in large engines with their associated ill-effects of heightened noise and deteriorating ambient air quality. In addition, Airport growth created an accelerated need for Airport-related facilities and land uses in the vicinity, such as increased highway capacity, motels and restaurants, and living accommodations for thousands of Airport employees. Increased amounts of impervious surfaces had upset natural water runoff rates, further downgrading already deteriorating water quality.

Although there were attempts at spot remedial actions, no overall strategy developed to alleviate growing conflicts between the Airport and its anxious neighbors. Perhaps most damaging to local residents was the "Climate of Uncertainty" created by what appeared to be ever expanding Airport traffic and on-site perimeters. Property owner uncertainty over

future Airport intents and effects appreciably affected area property values and other real estate associated matters. In addition to numerous lawsuits against the Port, the noise situation had caused the FAA to withhold mortgage commitments in certain residential sectors near the Airport. Information about aircraft noise exposure was then either unavailable or in dispute.

Citizens, as individuals or in organized groups, were frustrated in their attempts to cope with the worsening situation. By the summer of 1972, it had become abundantly clear to both the Port of Seattle and King County that a coordinated plan of programs for improvement was needed for the Sea Tac area. The incorporated areas of Normandy Park and Des Moines, the Highline School Districts and other governments of the area also expressed the need for a remedial program.

In March of 1973, the Port of Seattle and King County initiated a jointly sponsored study to develop a plan for the coordinated improvement of Sea Tac International Airport and surrounding communities. The FAA, anxious to assist as a catalyst in developing solutions to airport-vicinity environmental problems, approved a \$642,000 program, later to be known as the "Sea Tac Communities Plan".

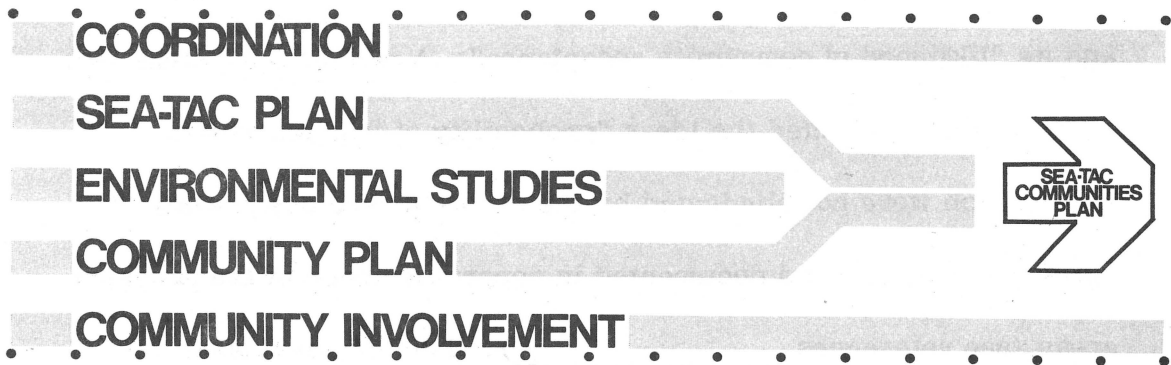
The FAA's Airport Trust Fund furnished two-thirds matching money for eighteen months. The Port and County, using their own personnel and equipment, each contributed approximately \$107,000 in-kind to fund the rest of the project. The main purpose of the Plan was to determine how the Airport and its neighbors can best achieve maximum compatibility. The Sea Tac Communities Plan, summarized by the text and exhibits that follow, represent the key product of this effort.

**chapter 3.2**

**sea-tac communities plan  
process**

### 3.2.1 WORK PROGRAM DESIGN

The planning process can be best characterized as having five major components: airport planning, vicinity or community planning, environmental studies, community involvement and coordination. A rather exhaustive work program, accompanying the FAA grant application, broke these components down into elements, tasks, sub-tasks, objectives and outputs. The work program provided the cookbook for the Sea-Tac Communities Plan effort.



As illustrated in the above diagram, the plan's development was to be based upon a deliberate "coming together" of airport and vicinity plans dependent largely on environmental conclusions. The community involvement and coordination components were on-going throughout the project and both dealt with the project's operation and policy formulation.

The eighteen month project was divided into three equal time phases. Phase I dealt primarily with the collection of data, characterizing existing conditions, and the initial organization of the community involvement program. The collection, analysis and documentation of alternatives occupied most of Phase II, along with the continuation of environmental studies.

Planning ideas were initially gathered from phase I activities and grouped into the following subject, or program areas: Airport Planning, Community Planning, Water Quality and Drainage, and Noise Abatement. Staff and citizen efforts during phase II were directed toward the generation of additional ideas and the examination of each idea, taken separately, for its "possibility of technical application" and its "likelihood of community acceptance". A weighting system was utilized which reflected the ideas "probability of implementation." Ideas which were not eliminated by the process were designated as "program choices" and documented in reports for each of the program areas (see references \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_). The 'choices' taken in combination, were then utilized to prepare planning goals and concepts objectives and policy considerations. The phase II process (see reference \_\_\_\_) allowed for all alternatives, regardless of how specific or how general, to be considered in a logical and progressive manner. Results were presented to the broader community via a newspaper tabloid distributed through local papers (reference \_\_\_\_).

Phase III took the alternatives generated by program areas and applied them to geographic areas. Four geographic areas were defined around the airport for this investigation. Special environmental, land use, and traffic problems were addressed for each along with



each area's specific compatibility problem with the airport .

The work program provided for the delineation of the airport environs (task 8.2-1 Reference No \_\_\_\_). As the project progressed, study findings identified impact areas and defined local planning and implementation areas. As shown on the following map, the overall study area included the entire area of the Highline School District and portions of the Federal Way and South Central School Districts. This area was the overall "planning jurisdictional area" used in Phase I for data collection purposes and can be considered to be the sub-regional area in which the airport is a part. The work program stipulated that "primary airport impact areas" and areas for implementation be identified. The four sub-areas shown on the map combine to form the airport vicinity area used in Phase III for policy and plan formulation.

The 'airport vicinity' is the target area for the policies and programs of this plan since it is defined as the area of primary airport community incompatibility. The planning effort is an ongoing one; King County has the major planning responsibility for the broader, or sub-regional, area of the airport as shown on the following map. Plans will continue to be developed for area more removed from the airport and will deal more specifically with subjects such as park and road planning. The Sea-Tac Communities Plan will be integrated with the broader Highline Community plan through post-plan coordination activities (see chapter 7.3).

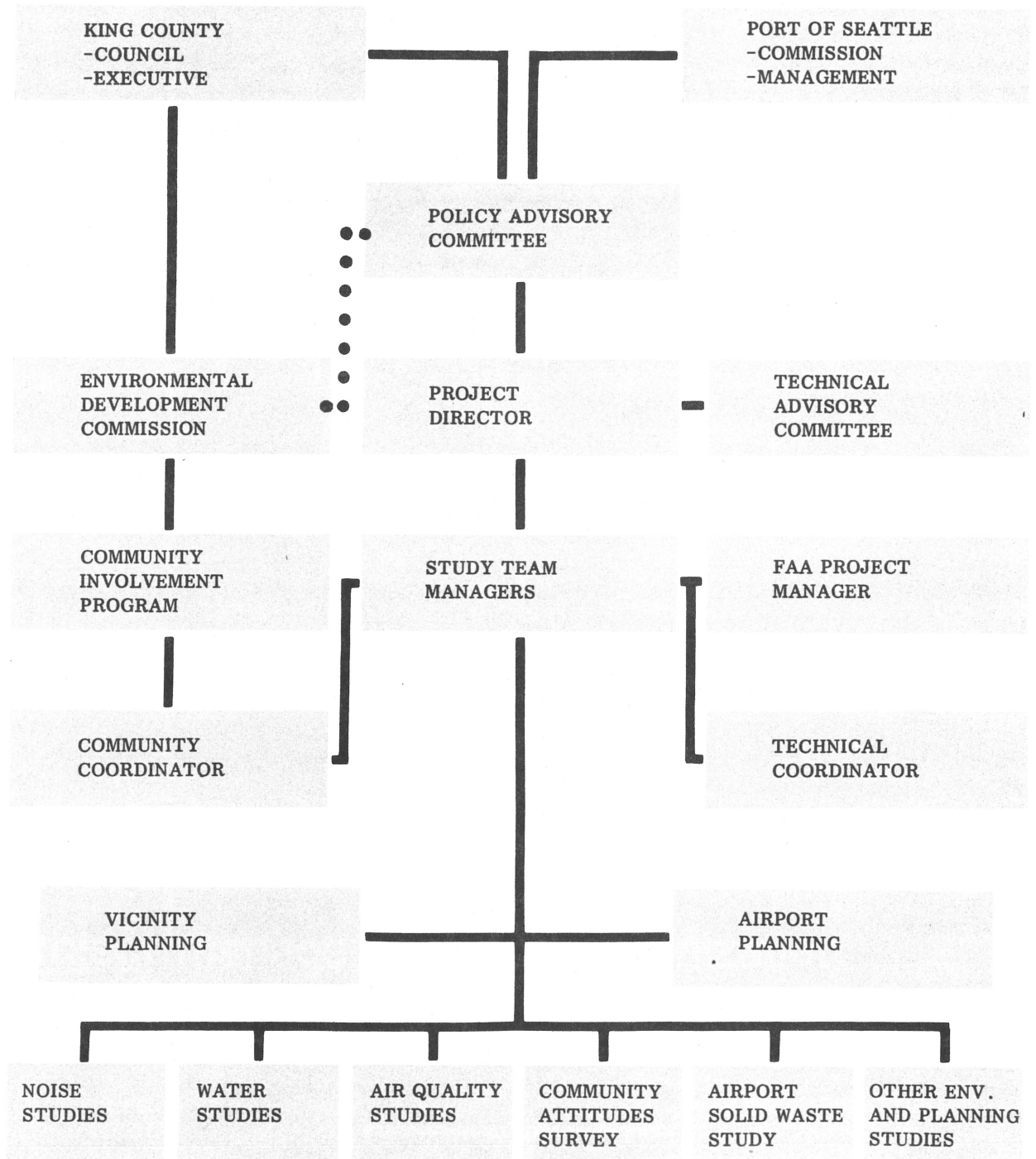
### 3.2.2 STUDIES AND ELEMENTS

Seventeen elements provided the major areas of study:

1. Inventory
2. Forecasts of Aviation Demand
3. Demand Capacity Analysis
4. Facility Requirements
5. Environmental Studies
6. Site Decision
7. Airport Layout Plan
8. Land Use Plan
9. Terminal Area Plan
10. Airport Access Plan
11. Schedules of Proposed Development
12. Develop Cost Estimates
13. Economic (Financial) Feasibility
14. Financing
15. Composite Implementation Program
16. Preparation of Reports
17. Public Information Program

The work program incorporated normally required FAA study elements with vicinity land use planning, environmental studies and community involvement. Element 5 (8.0.1 Reference ) outlines the project's environmental studies.

# project management and organization



The actual technical study efforts were overseen by the technical Advisory Committee (TAC), a project director, project managers from each agency, and a study team composed of all consultants and key planning personnel. Study team meetings were chaired by the consultant responsible for coordination - Peat, Marwick and Mitchell, Inc., while TAC was chaired by the project director. TAC's chief aim was to coordinate the project with planning efforts of other agencies. The committee included representatives from federal, state, regional and local agencies having planning responsibility in or related to the study area. Representatives from the airlines and aircraft manufacturers also participated on TAC. The Technical Advisory Committee provided a forum for reaction to noise, drainage, airport and land use planning methodologies and proposals from wide-ranging technical viewpoints.

### 3.2.4 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The community involvement program was carried out under the general direction of King County's Environmental Development Commission. It was the role of the Commission to assure that community involvement played a fundamental role in policy considerations. The commission appointed one of its members to serve on the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and assigned its Land Use Committee to oversee community involvement activities. Early in the project the committee adopted the following objectives as operational guidelines for the program:

*Promote Community Interest and Awareness of the Study*

*Include Citizen Participants in the Operations of the Community Involvement Program*

*Maximize Public Understanding of Technical Studies*

*Generate and Respond to Community Questions, Concerns & Ideas*

*Promote Community Expression of Study Activities and Plan Alternatives*

It was the full intent of the committee to form a partnership with the community rather than attempt to represent the community. The committee acted as a catalyst for the initial organization of the program and stimulated the interaction between the community involvement program, the technical staffs and PAC.

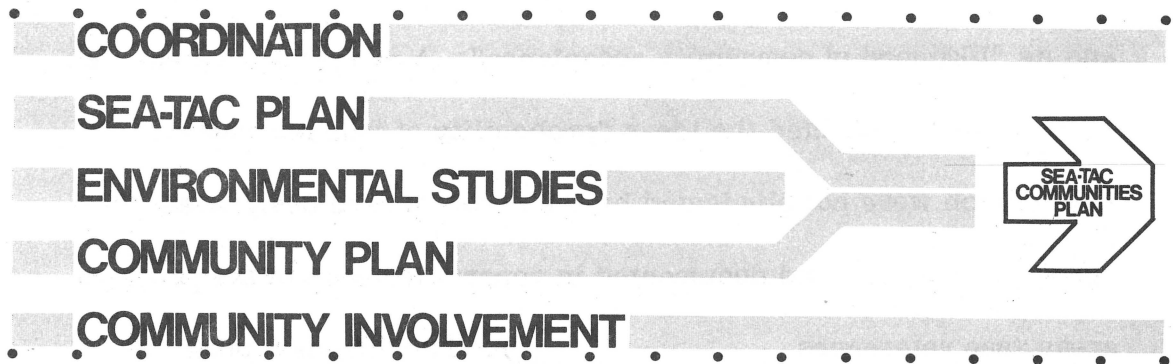
The nature and activity of the program can probably best be summarized by the following features and highlights:

1. 38,000 piece study area-wide mailing announcing study and inviting citizen participation.
2. Two initial community meetings to present study background, goals and organization attended by nearly 1,000 persons.
3. Office located in the community as a base for community involvement activities.
4. Full-time staff coordinator assisted by community volunteers
5. Open participation, no selected or 'closed' committees.
6. Publication and distribution of a monthly newsletter; sent to a mailing list of over 1,200.
7. Representatives on the project's steering committee - PAC Committee
8. Production of three half-hour videotape programs dealing with noise, drainage and community planning
9. Sponsorship of community-wide workshops entitled "Your 2¢ Worth" as part of the Highline School District's Community schools (adult education) program; videotape programs and other prepared material provided the points for discussion during the six week program which was attended by nearly 150 participants.

10. Publication of occasional information bulletins called "factsheets"
11. Participants determined the programming of community involvement activities
12. Publication of results of Phase I community involvement activities in a report entitled: "I. Community Perceived Image, and II. Community Expressed Concerns", which also contained historical information about the community.
13. Involved in production of a one hour television feature program entitled "How Would You Like to Sleep with a 747?" as part of a regular metropolitan-wide public affairs presentation, "People Power".
14. Stimulated the development of land use planning and environmental curricula in local schools.
15. Task forces generated planning alternatives during Phase II for consideration by technical analysts.
16. Basic goals and objectives for community planning, noise abatement and water quality and drainage determined by citizen task forces and presented to the broader community via a light page newspaper supplement entitled "Where Are We Going" included in four local newspapers with a circulation of 70,000.
17. Over 220 meetings of citizens involved in the project.
18. Documentation of community involvement in report by Land Use Committee to be submitted to the Policy Development Commission for approval.

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# sea-tac communities plan



**study area  
and airport  
vicinity planning  
areas**



sponsors  
**port of seattle  
king county**  
3.2.1

### 3.2.2 STUDIES AND ELEMENTS

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The studies and the responsibility for each are:

Air Quality Analysis - Environmental Systems Laboratories, Inc.

Water Quality and Drainage - Stevens, Thompson and Runyan, Inc.

Airport Solid Waste Study - Stevens, Thompson and Runyan, Inc.

Noise Impact Analysis -

measurement: Robin M. Towne & Associates

analysis: MAN Acoustics and Noise

Natural Determinants - King County Division of Land Use Management

Aesthetic Considerations - King County Division of Land Use Management

Public Opinion Survey - Battelle Institute Northwest

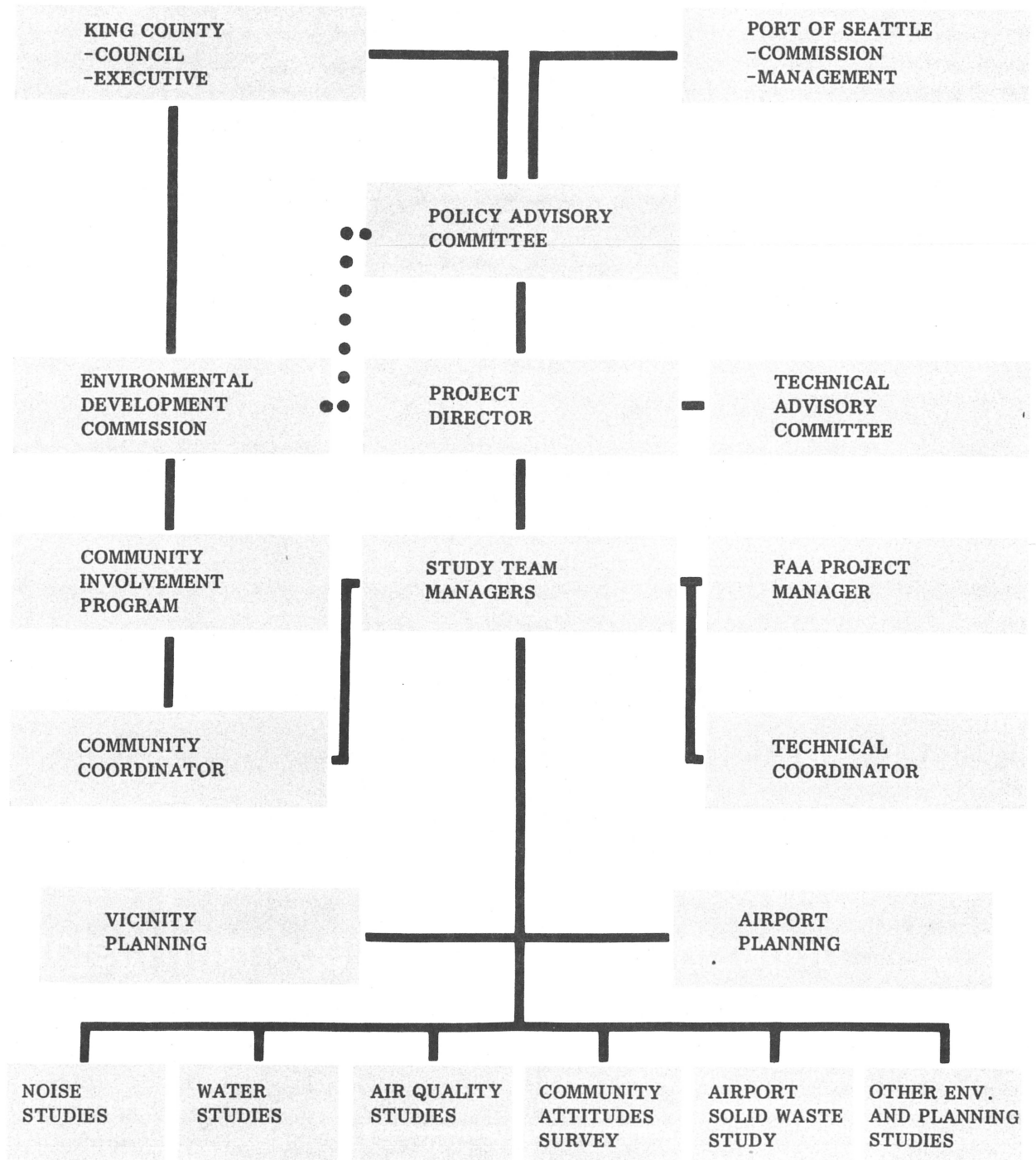
Each environmental study was required to determine study criteria and methodology, collect and analyze field and secondary data, characterize existing conditions, forecast conditions, and analyze and evaluate airport/vicinity alternatives in light of environmental findings and criteria. Each environmental study integrated its findings where applicable with those of the other studies. Each participated in community involvement by demonstrating field equipment and techniques, incorporating community concerns into criteria, and by participating in the evaluation of ideas generated by community participants.

### 3.2.3 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The cooperative and comprehensive nature of the project required an organizational structure which would provide effective coordination and management throughout the 18 month duration. The responsibility of directly advising two separate and large political bodies, as well as coordinating technical efforts amongst the study personnel and scores of agencies, had to be judiciously allocated.

The primary body established to oversee the project and monitor its progress was the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC). It consisted of key staff personnel from King County and the Port of Seattle, local citizens representatives and members from local schools, municipalities and special utility districts. In the early months of the project the committee's primary role was to monitor the project's progress and to resolve issues which might hinder that progress. PAC also reviewed programs to be sponsored by the Sea-Tac Communities' Plan effort, especially in the area of community involvement. The committee had the ultimate task of recommending to the Port of Seattle Commission and King County Council which represented the best policy judgement according to the project's findings and deliberations. The organizational structure was developed around PAC as the chief liaison with the official policy bodies.

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**chapter 3.3**  
**underlying goals**  
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