

PORT OF SEATTLE

P.O. BOX 1209

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98111

November 29, 1983

Dear Workshop Attendee:

Re: Jackson International Airport
Airport Noise Remedy Update
Community Attitude Survey

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the community attitude survey distributed at the August Noise Remedy Update neighborhood workshops. Your thoughts about aircraft noise as expressed in this survey will help the Update staff to develop workable noise remedies.

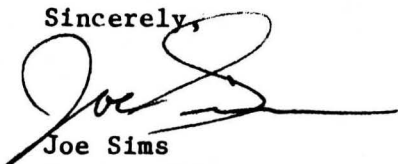
In September and October, McClure Research Company conducted two telephone surveys in addition to the one presented at the workshops. The results of all three are attached. Although the summary itself covers the significant information, I would like to highlight a few items of special importance.

The workshop survey (completed by 70% of the 350 participants) was quite similar to the telephone survey given to 151 residents in the general airport area now experiencing noise levels of 70 Ldn and above. The workshop attendees proved to be representative of the general surveyed population with a couple of minor exceptions. This important fact indicates that those who are actively involved in aircraft noise issues share the same concerns as those community members who do not often contact the Port with their questions and comments.

The surveys are only one of the many tools being used in developing the program. The results have given the staff a means of predicting likely program participation rates and costs for several tentative voluntary noise remedy programs. The Update, however, is not limited to considering only those noise remedies represented in the surveys.

If you have any questions about the Airport Noise Remedy Update, feel free to call Ms. Jody Yamanaka, Project Manager at 382-3327, or if you have questions about community involvement activities call Ms. Diane Summerhays at 382-3320. Further information regarding future workshops and progress on the Noise Remedy Update will be sent to you as it becomes available.

Sincerely,



Joe Sims
Project Director
Airport Noise Remedy Update

2520p
Enclosure

cc: Airport Noise Remedy Update Mailing List

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SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ATTITUDE SURVEYS

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of Study

The Port of Seattle is currently in the process of updating the 1976 Noise Remedy Plan for the Airport Community. Final recommendations concerning appropriate noise remedies that can be applied within the community will take into consideration at least three parameters:

- o cost feasibility and effectiveness of program options
- o implementation feasibility
- o the community's views and concerns

The third parameter -- the community's perspective -- has been actively explored through the Community Involvement Program component of the Update process, including a series of Port-sponsored neighborhood workshops, regular meetings of a Technical Advisory Working Committee, and a series of surveys in the community. This report covers the findings of the community surveys, which will be used as a guideline to determine:

- o suitability and acceptability of various noise remedy programs in the community (in particular: purchase guarantee, cost sharing of noise insulation, direct purchase of homeowners' avigation easements)
- o likely participation rates for each program option, in order to project the financial feasibility of various combinations of programs.
- o probable rate of participation in a purchase guarantee program in terms of time to help establish an overall program schedule
- o level of the Port's financial participation in program options.

The issues relevant to providing this input to the Port's planning were divided into two general categories and covered in two separate random sample surveys:

- o Overall noise management issues, such as residential development in the Airport vicinity; mandatory fair disclosure of noise levels to home purchasers; usage and development of area parks. Covered in a General Community Survey of residents in a broad area surrounding the Jackson International Airport.

- o Specific reaction to noise remedy program concepts (purchase guarantee, cost sharing of noise insulation, direct purchase of homeowners' avigation easements) and related participation issues. Covered in a Target Area Survey of residents in six specific areas that are particularly impacted by airport noise.

In addition, a third survey was conducted among participants in several of the Port-sponsored neighborhood workshops to gauge the extent to which those participants are representative of the general community's ideas and opinions.

The community opinions and attitudes delineated by these three surveys will be used to supplement and refine the Port's understanding of community viewpoints as expressed through other aspects of the Community Involvement Program of the Airport Noise Remedy Update. They will also be used to help improve the overall Community Involvement Program in this and future planning efforts.

B. Approach to Study

The geographic areas selected for study in the two random sample surveys were based upon the noise level (Ldn) measurements and projections presented in the SeaTac Noise Exposure Update (1982). The survey areas were defined by grid cell (the block measurement segments used in the Noise Exposure Update) as nearly as practicable.

Telephone interviewing was used for the two random sample surveys because achievable participation rates are higher for telephone interviewing than for other data collection methods and the sampling process is more controllable and thus more reliable. Appropriate steps were taken during the design of the questionnaires to ensure that survey respondents could understand and meaningfully answer the rather complex questions and issues presented in the interview. (See Appendix B for further detail concerning the telephone interviewing process.)

The three surveys can be summarized as follows:

- o General Community Survey: a random sample telephone survey among 151 residents (homeowners and renters) in areas substantially affected by airport noise. This area was defined as those grid cells currently experiencing measured Ldn levels of 70 and above, a fairly large geographic area (See Exhibit 1, page 5.) Although specific noise remedy programs are not appropriate throughout the entire area, general development and noise management issues do affect it. For this reason, the survey was designed to obtain community reactions to the general planning issues facing the Port and the Community: land use, park use and development, noise management (August, 1983).
- o Survey of Community Workshop Participants: a self-administered survey covering the same information as in the General Community Survey, distributed to all participants in a set of three community workshops. A total of 242 participants completed this survey. (August, 1983)
- o Target Area Survey: a random sample telephone survey of 734 homeowners in six areas selected as representative of neighborhoods that might be covered by specific noise remedy programs:
 1. Des Moines Corridor
 2. Des Moines Creek
 3. Riverton Heights
 4. North Corridor
 5. West Sunset
 6. Sunnydale

(See Exhibit 2, page 6)

Five of these areas (excepting Sunnydale) are projected to experience Ldn levels of 75+ in the year 2000.

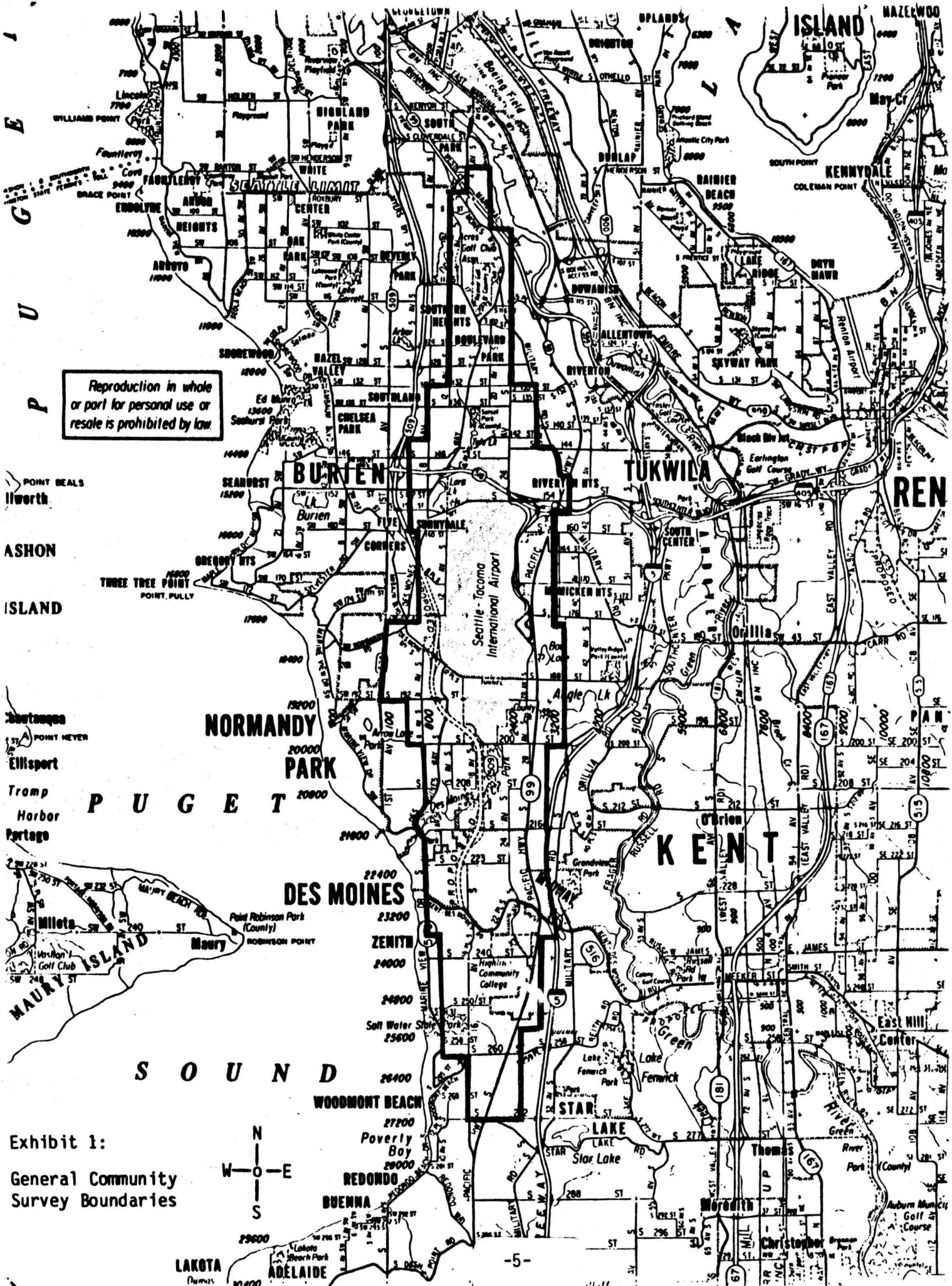
This survey covered specific reactions to the noise remedy program alternatives, purchase guarantee priority guidelines, and housing stock characteristics. The sample sizes provide high degrees of reliability within each target area and overall. The process also provided estimates of actual numbers of homeowners currently living in each area (September - October, 1983).

All three surveys included question series concerning awareness of and participation in the community involvement aspects of the Update Program.

This report presents the findings from each survey, sequentially as to their date of implementation. The final section of the report covers the information concerning community awareness of and participation in the Update Program from all three surveys.

In each section of this report a more detailed discussion of survey method precedes the presentation of results. Key data is then summarized in tabular format with textual analysis. The questionnaires used in each survey are included as Appendix A.

The surveys, as one component of the Airport Noise Remedy Update, were sponsored by the Port of Seattle and the Federal Aviation Administration. Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co., under contract to the Port of Seattle to prepare the Update, subcontracted to McClure Research Company to conduct the survey process and analyze the survey results.



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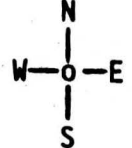
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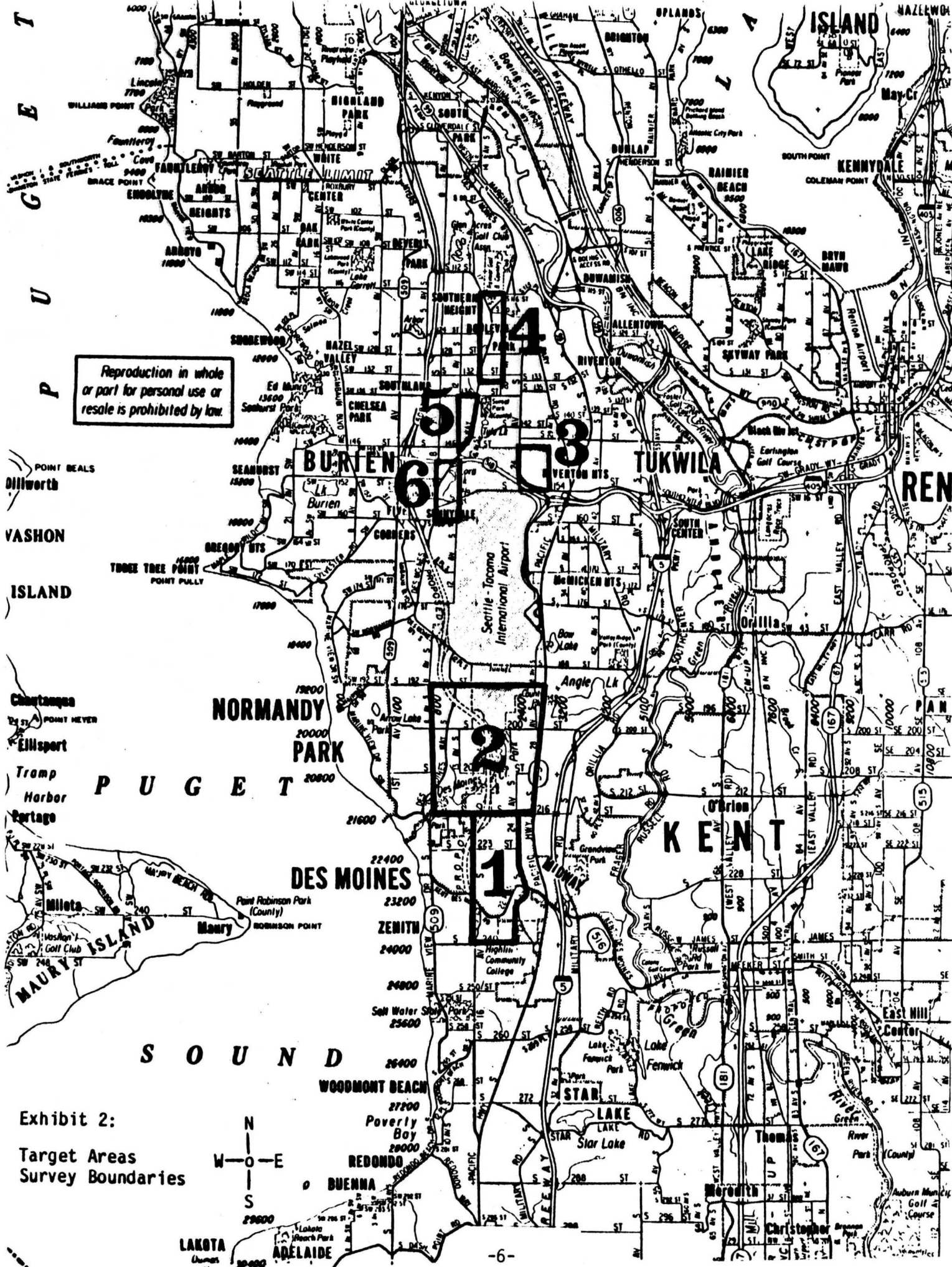
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Exhibit 1:
General Community
Survey Boundaries



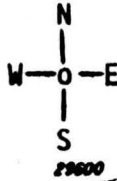
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Exhibit 2:
Target Areas
Survey Boundaries



II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Airport community, as represented by the General Community Survey, can be characterized as a stable area consisting primarily of modest, owner-occupied family homes:

- o Three out of four households have been established in the area for 10 years or longer; half for 20 years or longer.
- o The strong majority (82%) have an adult 25 - 64 years of age; a third have children in the home.
- o Three out of four residents (76%) live in their own home.
- o Average home value is \$77,500.
- o Average annual household income is \$29,700.

The area close-in to the airport, as represented by the Target Area Survey, has more rental units -- 36% -- but the owner-residents are equally long-term to the area and average home value is the same (\$77,400).

Airport noise is a significant although generally not unbearable problem to the Airport community, one that the majority of residents feel has not been improved substantially in the past 5 years.

Findings from the General Community Survey include:

- o Half (52%) cite airport noise as one of the two or three things they would most like to see changed or improved in their community.
- o However, only one in five (19%) consider the noise close to unbearable; the majority (57%) rate airport noise negatively, but not overwhelming.
- o Two thirds (66%) believe the noise level is either the same compared to five years ago or only somewhat changed (for better or worse). Two in five (42%) feel it has gotten worse (either somewhat or much).
- o The most-often cited reason for worsened noise levels is increased number of flights.

Despite the noise, most of those who live in the Airport vicinity want to maintain the area for residential use. The generally agreed-upon methods involve restricting noise impacts to narrow flight corridors, notifying new residents of noise impacts, and controlling new residential development:

- o Three out of four homeowners (74%) in the most noise-impacted areas agree that "My neighborhood should be maintained as a residential area." Half agree strongly. [Target Area Survey]
- o Two thirds of the overall Airport community (66%) disapproves of the concept of "fanning" airport noise. [General Community Survey]
- o Two thirds of the community (68% of the General Community survey sample) oppose new residential development under flight corridors, but only 42% of those in the Target Areas favor restricting new residential construction entirely.
- o Two thirds of the overall community (64% of the General Community Survey Sample) and three out of four in the most-impacted areas (74% of the Target Area Survey sample) believe that building codes should be revised to require noise insulation in new residential developments.
- o Four out of five in the overall community (79%) approved of mandatory fair disclosure to potential home buyers concerning actual noise levels. [General Community Survey]

In the most-impacted areas, as represented by the Target Area Survey, the majority of homeowners (59%) plan to stay in their neighborhood at least in the near future (10 years or so). About a third (37%) would prefer to move more immediately. However, this needs to be considered in the context of uncertainty that surrounds many homeowners' view of the trends in airport noise. They collectively view the Port of Seattle with suspicion and concern that noise levels will get worse because of increased number of flights over the next few years. Thus, their reactions to noise remedy program alternatives seem to involve a measure of "insurance" against the future, particularly among those who prefer to stay in the community for the time being.

- o A purchase guarantee program is the preferred option for a majority (59%) of those living in the most-impacted areas. Even among those who want to stay in their neighborhoods for the time being, 43% prefer this approach. And even with the program positioning the Port as buyer-of-last-resort, 77% consider it an acceptable solution. (Only 5% specifically objected to this feature of the program, preferring outright acquisition.)
- o A noise insulation program with the Port sharing its cost is the preferred option for one in five (18%) of homeowners in the most-impacted areas. Half (53%) consider it an acceptable solution. Interestingly, it was almost as acceptable to those who wish to move in the near future as to those who wish to stay in the neighborhood -- 45% vs. 57%.

- o Direct purchase of the avigation easement for some percentage of their home's fair market value would be the preferred option for 9% of the most-impacted area homeowners.
- o If a purchase guarantee program were not available, noise insulation cost-sharing remains the more widely-preferred of the two remaining programs. Two in five (41%) would choose it over purchase of their avigation easement. However, 26% would prefer such a direct purchase if the purchase guarantee were not available. In that case (no purchase guarantee), 19% would not want any program involvement.

(Note: Although attitudes were surveyed regarding specifics of purchase assurance, sound insulation, and purchase of avigation easements, other remedies such as outright acquisition will not be precluded from consideration in the development of the noise remedy program. The interview format still provided an opportunity for respondents to discuss the option of other programs, e.g., 5% of the Target Area sample rejected the idea of a purchase guarantee program in favor of outright purchase.)

The programs are evaluated by homeowners from a cost perspective. Although the Target Area Survey format did not allow for detailed cost comparison, it is clear that the financial aspects of the programs are important to the acceptability of each:

- o The method of determining fair market value (FMV) was the most-often cited concern about a purchase guarantee program.
- o Interest in a noise insulation cost-sharing program increased sharply with higher proposed levels of Port commitment: from 4% if the Port were to pay 25% of the cost to a total of 67% if the Port were to pay 100%.
- o Interest in direct purchase of their avigation easement increased as the percentage FMV figure increased: from 14% if the Port were to pay 5% of FMV to 31% if the Port were to pay 20% of FMV.

Method of FMV computation was cited as a concern about this program option as well.

Participation levels for each of the program options can be estimated based on the following assumptions:

- o approximately 1300 owner-occupied dwelling units do not already have an avigation easement in their deed (At least 3% do have such an easement.)
- o relevant program features will not differ substantially from those presented to the survey respondents.

- o participation estimates are based on Target Area Survey respondents' stated intention to participate, without regard to other programs that might be available. Thus, if all three programs were available, estimated participation in the direct purchase of avigation easement or noise insulation cost-sharing programs should be adjusted downwards.

It should be noted that Target Area Survey homeowners who projected participation in a purchase guarantee program 6+ years from now frequently commented that a change in neighborhood characteristics (transient, commercialized) would probably encourage them to move sooner.

There are notable differences among the six areas targeted for study in their current characteristics and reactions to the remedy program alternatives:

- o Three areas were particularly inclined towards a purchase guarantee program:
 - Des Moines Creek has a higher proportion of young families and greater mobility (23% of the homeowners are new to the area in the past 5 years). One in ten homeowners lives in a mobile home.
 - Riverton Heights has a relatively higher proportion of somewhat older families, and a high degree of residential stability (10% new to the area in the past 5 years.)
 - Sunnydale also has a higher proportion of older families and a high degree of residential stability (11% new to the area). It is also more affluent than most of the areas, as indicated by average estimated home value and annual household income. Interestingly, this neighborhood was the most polarized -- it actually has the lowest but most adamant level of interest in purchase guarantee; 42% would not participate in any program if the guarantee weren't available.
- o Three areas were relatively less inclined towards purchase guarantee and more favorable towards noise insulation cost-sharing and/or direct purchase of avigation easements:
 - Des Moines Corridor has a higher proportion of younger families and the highest concentration of multi-family owner-occupied residences (e.g. duplexes, condominiums) and residential change (31% new in past 5 years). It is the most affluent of the target areas, with the strongest stated interest in maintaining the area's residential character.
 - North Corridor is a relatively older area, with comparatively moderate residential stability (19% new in past 5 years).

- West Sunset is an older population, with 44% currently living in their own mobile homes. Residential change is moderate (25% in past 5 years). Although a purchase guarantee program would enjoy strong participation in this neighborhood, a direct purchase of the avigation easement is particularly acceptable, and projected participation in a noise insulation cost-sharing program is higher than elsewhere. This area may be less concerned with the specifics of the program and more concerned with receiving some reimbursement for its situation.

It is noteworthy that those areas with stronger interest in a purchase guarantee program evidence higher and more widespread levels of community awareness of and participation in the Noise Remedy Update program than do the three areas that are more receptive to other program alternatives. Overall, a third of those in the target areas (38%) were aware of the Update program at the time of the interview; almost half (46%) were aware of Port-sponsored community meetings concerning airport noise. One in eight (13%) had actually attended one (or more) of those meetings.

There seems to be general satisfaction with the community meetings -- 73% of those who have attended would like them to continue. And those who attend are generally representative of community opinion. There is close correspondence between meeting participants' views and those of the overall Airport community on development and noise management issues. The only substantive exception to this concerns use of open land for additional park areas vs. commercial/light industrial. The community as a whole is more favorable toward expansion of park area; meeting participants are more likely to favor commercial development.

Usage of the more developed Airport area parks is widespread. In the three months prior to the General Community Survey, half the households had been to Saltwater State Park and a third to Angle Lake and Seahurst. However, current usage of North SeaTac and Des Moines Creek parks is more limited -- only about one in ten households. There is little support for increasing property taxes to fund further development of those two areas (66% oppose such an increase).

