

April 9th Hearing On Wetlands

After a flood of adverse public comments, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has announced a public hearing on April 9 on the Port of Seattle's request for Federal permission to destroy wetlands in the site of the proposed third runway. The Port offers to create new wetlands in Auburn, in an unrelated watershed, as compensation. The hearing will be begin at 7 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center, Foster High School, 4242 So. 144^{th,} Tukwila. Please phone the RCAA office (206) 824-3120 to reserve seats on the bus.

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Federal Way, Tacoma Seek FAA OK For Flight Changes

Revised flight tracks, to lessen noise over Tacoma and Federal Way, will be discussed in a meeting on April 16 between a citizens' task force from the two cities and FAA. U.S. Rep. Adam Smith is spear-heading efforts to lessen impacts from the four-post plan (implemented in 1990.)

KCIA Management Wants Longer Runway

Plans for an 800-foot extension of King County International Airport's runway, to 10,000 feet, bringing jet traffic even closer to Georgetown's residential area, were unexpectedly announced to the public on February 18 by KCIA Management.

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Fuel Dumping?

Report suspected fuel dumping and unusual jet exhaust fumes to the Puget Sound Air Pollution Control Agency (PSAPCA), at (206) 343-8800 or 1 (800) 552-3565. Truth in Aviation The Newsletter of the Regional Commission on Airport Affairs Vol. 5, No. 1 Spring 1998

AIRPORT EXPANSION PROGRAM TOO BIG FOR PORT STAFF TO HANDLE

Ambitious expansion projects at Sea-Tac Airport are starting to unravel, thanks to massive underestimates of costs and ever-growing scheduling problems. Trouble came to light on January 13, when a revised cost estimate for the new parking gargage was released to the Port Commission, showing a 24 percent increase from a \$52.8 million estimate published only 11 months earlier. Undaunted, the Commission voted, 3-1, Jack Block dissenting, to plunge forward. Commissioner Gary Grant was asked, how much more will the price tag for other expansion projects increase in the next eight years? Grant replied, "That's a legitimate question, and one we'll be asking as well".

On January 23, a memorandum to the Commission reported that the complexity of managing all the 100-plus airport expansion projects was beyond the capability of Port staff. Gina Marie Lindsey, Director of the Aviation Division, and Michael Feldman (who now holds the title of Director of Aviation Professional & Technical Services) sug-

Port Changes Course, Supports Highline Schools Noise Study

Abandoning hope of favorable outcome in negotiations with the Port of Seattle, on February 12 the Highline School District announced an independent study of airport-related noise pollution in the District's schools, and the costs of solving classroom learning interference. The Highline school board has committed \$330,000 to the project, half of which comes from a grant by Governor Locke from his discretionary funds.

Announcement of the study was first belittled by the Port, but on March 4, Aviation Director Gina Marie Lindsey announced, "There is no cap at \$50 million" on the Port's potential contribution to noise remedies in the Highline Schools. She also retreated from the Port's refusal to consider paying for air gested a slow-down of projects, new controls over capital outlays, and hiring more consultants to do such work as detailed engineering scheduling, design review, and contract administration. Lindsey and Feldman reported that the Port does not even have enough office space for all the needed staff.

In response, the Commission voted on February 24 to accept the staff proposal to seek consultants for a multivear contract for program and construction management services for the expansion projects, at a cost of \$10.5 million for 1998 alone. During discussion, Mr Feldman commented that the present schedule for completion on various projects would require a tripling or quadrupling of the Port's normal rates of capital expenditure. He added, " ... while there is urgency, certainly, to get on with the improvement program, we want to do it right, we are not interested in doing it fast." His conclusion: "Our current resources, and our delivery system, really are not adequate to deliver a program of this magnitude." Continued on page 6

conditioning in schools. Highline School Superintendent Joe McGeehan warmly welcomed Lindsey's change of position.

In Spring 1997, the District had proposed to the Port that the two agencies jointly sponsor pilot studies of the noise problem. The negotiations failed: The Port would not commit to any assistance to the District unless the District accepted the third runway without further mitigation. While the Port public-relations machine claimed that the Port had offered \$50 million to deal with the problem, in fact, as of February 12, the Port had never made any written offer of cash assistance, in any amount, according to Highline board member Shay Shual-Berke, M.D., and the District's attorney, David Hokit.

The district plan has several steps. First, an opinion survey of residents in the district, followed by direct communication with the residents in public meetings (two were held on March 4 and *Continued on page 5*

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Miller Creek Mud Threat Continues

According to a Port memorandum dated 12 February, the Port of Seattle and its contractor have vet to control the threat of further discharges into Miller Creek from the North Employee Parking Lot project. The control measures put into place after three incidents of mud flooding from the project site into the Miller Creek watershed in September and October 1997 require two supplemental chemical treatment systems consisting of four 20,000 gallon chemical-treatment tanks, a sand filter, and micron filter. The additional expense of renting this gear is estimated by Port staff at \$500,000.

After the incidents last Fall, the Port and the Department of Ecology assured the public that the new erosion-control measures put into effect were enough to ensure that nothing could possibly ever go wrong at the Parking Lot site in the future. Apparently that was not accurate.

Earl Munday, former manager of the Port's Noise Remedy Noise Office, is now in charge of the parking lot construction.

Amsterdam Protest Delays Flight

Thirteen members of Friends of the Earth Netherlands were arrested on 19 February after they delayed departure of a U.S.-bound aircraft at Schiphol Airport (Amsterdam) for three hours by climbing on the the plane. The environmentalists were protesting against the continued increase in flights at Schiphol, which is not in line with the environmental standards set by the Dutch government earlier this year.

C.A.S.E. Plans DOE Challenge

Citizens Against Sea-Tac Expansion says it will appeal the proposed Port of Seattle water quality permit under the National Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The appeal deadline is March 20, as TIA goes to press. For details, attend the CASE Meeting at the ERAC, 7 p.m., April 1.

PR Firm Promotes Des Moines Conveyor Belt

While claiming to be an environmental firm, and without admitting who they worked for, the firm Gogerty Stark & Abbott conducted two focus groups on January 26 with randomly-chosen Des Moines residents, searching for themes that would induce citizens of Des Moines to support the Port's proposal to build a conveyor belt from the waterfront to the Airport to haul some of the 27 million cubic yards of fill needed if the third runway is built.

Participants were not happy with the secrecy as to sponsors or purpose, or with the tone of the questions, or with being spied on by observers behind oneway glass, or with being forbidden to take home the operators' glossy propaganda hand-outs. Gogerty's people tried to persuade participants that the third runway is a 'done deal', that trucking fill to the Airport will be an environmental disaster (no argument there!), and that a nice quiet conveyor belt from the waterfront up Des Moines Creek to the Airport would be a benign alternative, especially with lots of undefined (and purely imaginary) 'amenities' and

KCIA Management Announces Plans To Lengthen Runway

Plans to extend of King County International Airport's runway, to 10,000 feet, bringing jet traffic 800 feet closer to Georgetown's residential area, were unexpectedly announced to the public on February 18. Throughout the Master Plan Update process, starting in December 1995, Airport management and King County elected officials have strongly denied that there were any thoughts of physical expansion. As recently as December 1997, Airport management told the County Council that airport expansion was ruled out.

The announcement, made by Airport manager Cynthia Stewart, stunned most citizens in attendance at the two sessions of a public meeting, called to discuss adjustments to the 'conceptual' plan for major expansion of cargo operations released last Fall. The purpose of the extension is to meet the needs of unnamed cargo operators, whose heavy planes, according to Ms Stewart, need a 10,000-foot runway to meet FAA 'mitigation' provided. Participants' accounts, and the report of the Gogerty firm to their employer, show that the spin doctors found few takers for this fairy tale.

Documents obtained by RCAA and the City of Des Moines show that it was the Gogerty firm running the groups for the Westcot Company. Westcot has the inside track to build and operate the proposed conveyor system for the Port. The purpose of the exercise is shown in a letter from Westcot co-owner Henry R. Hopkins to the Des Moines City Council. Hopkins claims that the two focus groups "viewed positively the idea ... of a conveyor system when it was compared with the impacts of trucking".

In fact, Gogerty's written report shows that the concept of a conveyor belt was originally considered to be "outrageous", and that even after the elaborate sales pitch from Gogerty staff, complete with phony pictures of the system running up Des Moines Creek, "people were very skeptical that

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safety standards. It appears that the Airport and the cargo firms have been operating in violation of these standards for several years, with silent acquiescence by FAA.

Reaction from the public at the meeting was immediate, emphatic, and negative. They denounced failure to consider any mitigation for the increased impacts on Georgetown.

Councilmember Dwight Pelz (D-5) who had a few days' advance notice of the proposal, advised the Airport by letter that he would "oppose any attempt to extend the runway as part of the Master Plan". Councilmember Pelz is chairman of the County Council's Committee on Commerce, Trade & Economic Development, which oversees the Airport. Pelz raised questions about mitigation-unmentioned in the planning process to date—and suggested that it might be the Airport's wish to avoid annoying Associated Grocers, whose warehouse at the south end of the runway would be taken to permit runway extension, and so a working-class neighborhood was being forced to bear the burden.

The Airport's response was that mitigation problems will be dealt with in

LET SEA-TAC PAVE OVER WETLANDS, CREEKS? ARMY ENGINEERS' HEARING SET FOR APRIL 9

After a flood of adverse public comments, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has announced a public hearing on April 9 on the Port of Seattle's for Federal permission to destroy wetlands in the site of the proposed third runway. The Port proposes to create new wetlands in Auburn, in an unrelated watershed, as "compensatory wetland". Critics argue that the environmental ordinances of neighboring cities, and State and federal law all forbid such substitution. Residents of Burien. Des Moines, Normandy Park, and SeaTac have protested vigorously about the Airport's plans to cover several acres of

Take Free Bus to Hearing!

The hearing will be begin at 7 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center, Foster High School, 4242 So. 144^{th,} Tukwila. RCAA and C.A.S.E. will provide bus service to the hearing from the parking lots of Burien City Hall (415 S.W. 150th) and the RCAA office (19900 4th S.W., Normandy Park). Busses will leave both locations at 6.30 p.m. Please phone the RCAA office (206) 824-3120 to reserve seats on the bus.

PORT LAWYERS GO AFTER ANOTHER 'RENEGADE' CITY

Now it's Burien's turn to have its comprehensive plan savaged by the Port of Seattle before the Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board. Last year, the Port attacked the Des Moines plan for having the audacity to oppose expansion of Sea-Tac Airport and to set a city noise limit (55 LDN). According to the Port's lawyers, any expression of concern about the impacts of Sea-Tac expansion brand a city as a 'renegade' needing harsh discipline.

Such claims are raised in a Port petition dated January 2, asking that Burien's new comprehensive plan be found in violation of the Growth Management Act and that the City be ordered to rewrite it to Port specifications. the Miller Creek and Des Moines Creek watersheds with fill, and to channelize significant parts of the creeks.

Permits for this activity are also required from the Department of Ecology, which is co-sponsoring the hearing. Written comments on the proposal may be submitted to the two agencies. They are due at the Army Engineers by Sunday, 19 April, and at Ecology by Wednesday, 29 April. Call RCAA or check our website for addresses.

This hearing pertains to permits for construction activity, not ongoing industrial activity, which are governed by the Airport's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. The Port of Seattle claims that the FAA requires that the wetlands be destroyed in order to prevent bird-aircraft collisions. The FAA is silent on the subject. Critics ask, "What birds?" The City of Auburn was originally unsympathetic to the deal, but the Port then offered to give the city some 20 acres of land that Auburn could use for stormwater detention, to deal with an existing flooding problem in the area. The Port also committed to paying Auburn a portion of the city's costs for future new streets and utilities in the vicinity. It has offered no compensation to the communities damaged by the filled wetlands.

Turn-About's Fair Play! ACC Cities Challenge City of SeaTac's Comprehensive Plan

The legal war over municipal comprehensive plans took another twist on February 11, when the cities of Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park, and Tukwila filed a legal challenge to the City of SeaTac's comprehensive plan.

The cities charge that SeaTac's comprehensive plan conflicts with the previously-adopted plans of those ACC cities, in violation of the Growth Management Act.

SeaTac made major amendments to its plan last Fall in order to bring it into compliance with an interlocal agreement between that city and the Port of Seattle adopted last summer, to accomodate third-runway construction.

Sea-Tac Loses Its Noise Monitors

The central computer for the noise-monitoring system at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport has crashed, so noise monitoring stopped in early March. An interim system has been ordered, to make the measurements needed for the Airport's current Part 150 study.

The interim system, to be leased from Bruel & Kjaer, will include new noise measurement hardware (new microphones and new data storage and analysis equipment). The Port still plans to install an entirely new permanent noise-monitoring system after the Part 150 study ends.

DOE Cleanup Rules Hit at Hearing

Nearly one hundred Sea-Tac Airport neighbors West Seattle neighbors, and environmentalists turned out on February 18 at Camp Long in Seattle to voice concerns to the Department of Ecology about its proposed interim rules for cleaning up areas contaminated by petroleum by-products. The occasion was a hearing on a DOE plan for cleaning up the contaminated ARCO tank farm site on Harbor Island. Airport neighbors know that DOE proposes to use the same inadequate rules for clean-ups of contaminated parts of Sea-Tac Airport, thus lessening protection for watersheds in and near the Airport. DOE was not expecting much public interest or the huge volume of negative comments received.

Environmental groups represented at the hearing included Friends of the Green River, WashPIRG, Friends of the Earth, Puget Soundkeepers, C.A.S.E., RCAA, and the Duwamish Tribe. The proposed interim rules allow untreated hazardous wastes to be abandoned on site. Those testifying wanted wastes to be treated and were concerned that the interim rules might become permanent.

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KING COUNTY STUDY OF AIRPORT IMPACTS STARTS APRIL 15

King County planners have been charged by the County Council with studying the impacts of airport activities, and developing recommendations for mitigation. The staff will report their proposed work program to the Council on April 15. RCAA and other citizen groups are working closely with staff and Council on this program.

Leading the study team from the Executive's Office of Budget and Strategic Planning is Ms Ikuno Martin, a growth-management specialist. Ms Ann Masterson, a transportation planner, is also participating.

County officials have told RCAA that they envision the study as ongoing for several years. RCAA Past President Len Oebser heads the RCAA task force on these studies. \Leftrightarrow

Environmental Groups Call for Airports To Report Chemical Releases

Major environmental groups have filed a petition with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, requesting Federal rules that would have the effect of requiring all airports in the U.S. to file annual reports describing chemical releases at their facilities.

Comments (in triplicate), referring to Document no. OPPTS-400122, may be submitted by April 13 to

OPPT Document Control Officer (7407) Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics U.S. EPA Room G-099, East Tower 401 M St. S.W. Washington, D.C. 20460

For further details call the RCAA office or Vickie Anderson of U.S. EPA at 1 (202) 260-3544 or send her an email at mailto:anderson.vicki@epamail.epa.gov.

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Port To Replace Noise Insulation

The Port of Seattle needs to retrofit windows in nearly 800 homes previously-treated, according to memoranda prepared for internal use and a recent Port letter to homeowner-participants. Many complaints from participants in the Port of Seattle's noise-insulation program and concerns about safety have led to a re-design of the program. More than \$1.5 million has already been spent to correct earlier errors in 191 homes.

Reports of severely fogged windows began in 1992. Quietly, the Port abandoned new installation of 'multiple windows' (add-on storm windows) in 1993, without advising earlier participants of any problems. Apparently, this change was also prompted by determinations by the Building Departments of the cities of SeaTac, Burien, and Des Moines that installation of secondary storm windows did not meet their building

Conveyor Belt...Continued from page 2 [the possible benefits of a conveyor belt] would happen in reality". Mitigation money "was easily perceived as a bribe". The number of participants actually favoring the conveyor-belt proposal is nowhere stated in the Gogerty report. Participant Richard C. Falk, in a letter to Des Moines Mayor Scott Thomasson, said that the "nearly unanimous responses ... as to the conveyor belt alternative [were], forget it." Participant Marjorie O'Neill told RCAA that the proposal included tunneling through portions of Des Moines Creek Park, and that in her group the "moderator" was shocked by the intensity of opposition. Ms O'Neill also reports that the people running the focus group had plans to send fliers to everyone in Des Moines. containing "things that would shock folks".

Participants Oppose 3rd Runway

On the broader questions involved in the Sea-Tac expansion controversy, the sponsors gathered little joy from this exercise. The report of the Gogerty firm states clearly that there was almost unanimous opposition to the third runway and to any steps to implement it. Of the participants who opposed the runway but "were resigned that ultimately it would be built", most were **not** "willing to discuss alternative construction methods. They did not want codes. As of the end of 1993, the Port had insulated 1215 homes.

By January 1995, complaints escalated from fogging to structural deterioration caused by condensation, and a program of window replacement was begun. The older add-on storm windows are replaced with new permanent double-pane windows.

In February 1998, the present manager of the program, Jazzi Richardson addressed a mass mailing to homeowners, advising them about condensation problems as well as difficulties and dangers in opening windows in emergencies. The letter details remedial measures done to date.

People whose homes were insulated before 1994 and who are having problems with their old windows should telephone Port staff at (206) 439-5152 or (206) 439-6609.

to see anything happen that might encourage construction and they were still eager to hold out hope that alternative airport sites might be used."

The Gogerty report also noted that local officials were supported in their litigation against the runway proposal, and that the "Port of Seattle generally lacked credibility with focus group participants".

One person originally selected as a group member was Des Moines City Councilman Dan Sherman, who was bumped off the panel when his identity was learned. He donated his \$60 attendance money to RCAA.

Polling under the sponsorship of the Port last Spring showed two conveyor belt plans were opposed by residents of Burien, Des Moines, and Normandy Park, by margins greater than 2 to 1. If these focus meetings are any indication, public sentiment against the conveyor belt has grown stronger in the past year.

New Seattle Group Sets Up Web Site

Seattle Council for Airport Affairs, the area's newest airport-concern group, has set up a website at http:// www.scn.org/activism/scaa/ index.html. The group, which is closely following King County Airport issues, can also be reached at (206) 722-2256.

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about

RCAA Needs You! Your Contributions are vital.
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5.) Third, the District will obtain upto-date scientific measurements of the noise in classrooms, to identify the structures affected, and the degree of the remedies needed. Students will participate in the measurements through a program called SoundNet. A detailed architectural and engineering study will determine the true costs of the work needed. The last step is to identify all who share responsibility for the pollution problem to agree, once and for all, on a fair and speedy solution. At each stage, the District will report to district residents in public meetings.

National Expert Retained

The School Board has retained Dr. Sanford Fidell, of BBN Technologies, as its noise expert. Dr. Fidell is an internationally recognized authority. Dr. Fidell's analysis and testimony during hearings before the Puget Sound Regional Council Expert Arbiration Panel were key to the Panel's decision in 1996 that the Port of Seattle had not met a major precondition of third-runway approval by PSRC—a demonstrated significant reduction of Airport noise.

The Port and the District have been at odds about noise mitigation ever since the second runway opened for business, bringing new noise over many of the District's buildings (mostly constructed during the 'baby boom' of the 40s and 50s). School officials note that the buildings were built without air-conditioning (HVAC systems). Insulating such buildings and adding double-paned windows will increase interior temperatures in warm weather-but with new HVAC systems the only way to cool the buildings is opening the doors and windows, which defeats the whole purpose of noise insulation. Until March 4, the Port had consistently refused to consider contributing toward new ventilating systems.

Superintendent Joe McGeehan and other school officials point out that if they undertake insulation work, today's building code may require major changes in buildings built in the 60s and before, and newly-recognized hazards, such as asbestos, must be dealt with. The Port agrees it should help pay for such problems.

In a press conference held immediately after the School District's announcement of its program, Port officials claimed that no new studies were needed, that all noise impacts were fully understood, and that they had offered to cover all expenses except "capital improvements". Observers note that the Port's alleged offer has not been made public. At the District's public meeting on March 4, Airport Director Gina Marie Lindsey did not commit the Port to accepting responsibility for dealing with unknown factors like possible asbestos but did agree to consider new ventilation systems.

One recent study from Cornell University confirmed that students in schools with chronic noise problems, such as near airports, don't read as well as those in quiet schools because they tune out speech in the noisy environment. Another study by Cornell released March 4 is discussed below.

Jet Noise Hurts Kids, New Cornell Study Shows

The constant roar from jet aircraft can seriously affect the health and psycological well-being of children, according to a new Cornell University study. The health problems resulting from chronic airport noise, including higher blood pressure and boosted levels of stress hormaones, the researchers say, may have lifelong effects. *Truth in Aviation* is published by the Regional Commission on Airport Affairs (RCAA), a coalition of citizens groups concerned with airport expansion and air transportation issues. *Closing date this issue: March* 17, 1998

RCAA

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JUDGE SAYS PSRC HAS NO MITIGATION DUTIES

A Superior Court judge has ruled in litigation between the Airport Communities Coalition and the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) that the regional transportation planning agency had no responsibilities to plan for mitigation of third-runway impacts when it included that project in its regional transportation plan. Putting Judge Robert H. Alsdorf's ruling into plain English, the planning body had a right to disregard the harm its decisions would do to others. That task, he held, falls to the Port of Seattle. Other lawsuits are contesting the Port's failure to provide adequate mitigation.

The case was appealed to the State Court of Appeals, Division One, on March 13.

Westside Citizens Band Together

Property owners in the third runway acquisition zone on SeaTac's Westside have organized to get better information on their rights in the Port's buy-out process. Attorney's specializing in condemnation law are advising the group. Check with the RCAA office for times and places.

Truth in Aviation **RCAA News**

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Inside: Army Corps Hearing on Destroying Wetlands Around Sea-Tac

April 9th Don't Miss It!

Too Big (Continued from page 1)

Feldman also cautioned that the \$1.7 billion cost figure used by Port spokespersons is in 1996 dollars, and that it "will change as projects are completed and new projects are defined". He did not say if the "undefined" projects in contemplation have gone through environmental review. (The figure also does not include the cost of borrowed money, certain to add hundreds of millions to the total bill.)

Remodelling on the Run?

These complications arise in part from the refusal of the Port and FAA to consider the Denver solution: a new airport, built from scratch, at a suitable location. As Mr Feldman put it, "What we are really being asked to do is remodel, renew, and expand the airport while it continues to operate. I have heard somebody say that this is like Paul Allen trying to tear down the Kingdome, and re-build the stadium, while the game is being played."

The staff recommended, and the Commission authorized, another \$2,125,000 in payments to consultants in the period 1998/99 for preparation of "project analysis reports"—final analysis for "go"/ "no go" decisions. At the Commission meeting on March 10, Port Commissioner Grant pressed hard for solid numbers on the cost of the 26 or 27 million cubic yards of fill needed for the runway's base, figures often promised but never delivered. Grant was not pleased about a staff memo suggesting a special briefing "this spring". He was promised solid numbers in two weeks.

Bids have been solicited for two small, highly preliminary projects. A \$19.8 contract to build a taxiway parallel to existing main runways, with interconnecting taxiways, has been awarded. Bids for a contract to build an embankment in connection with street relocation came in far above engineering estimates (23 percent to 48 percent), and were rejected.

Runway Not Begun

Contrary to assertions made in the January/February issue of the Port's publication, *Sea-Tac Forum*, construction of the third runway has NOT begun. The runway is to be built on land located west of the existing facility, most of which the Port does not own. By the Port's present optimistic property acquisition schedule, the site will not be in full Port ownership and the land cleared until mid-2001. That would appear to be the earliest that actual runway construction could begin.

KCIA

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the EIS, after the County Executive and County Council have agreed to the Master Plan Update proposal. In the past, Ms Stewart has said that mitigation would be dealt with in a future Part 150 study. Rather than airing any of these problems publicly, Ms Stewart urged Councilmember Pelz to meet with her for a "personal' briefing in detail.

Airport management has also attempted to sell their expansion plans to Seattle City Council in a special briefing to which neighbors and expansion critics were not invited. Citizens who complain to the Council are answered by a form letter, signed by all the Council, advising them to go tell it to the Airport's Round Table (stacked with proexpansion proponents).

Seven of the 13 County Council members wrote on February 23 that the Airport has a duty be a 'good neighbor", and requesting that the Round Table not only recommend the Master Plan alternative but also propose "viable ways to reduce noise and make the airport a better neighbor". Relying on the Part 150 process after the fact would require "a public trust that is not available to us on this issue", the Councilmembers advised.