

REGIONAL AIRPORT SYSTEM PLAN 1988-2020
AIR TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT OF THE
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN
October 1987

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of the 1988-2020 Regional Airport System Plan (RASP) is to identify and select solutions to airport facility needs. It sets forth general policies which guide the development and operation of a system of public use airports for the benefit of the greater metropolitan area encompassed by King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. The Regional Airport System Plan is one element of the PSCOG Regional Transportation Plan, which addresses multi-modal transportation needs of the region over the next 33 years to the year 2020.

WHAT HAS CHANGED SINCE THE PLAN WAS ADOPTED IN 1982?

Although the airports in the region have not changed substantially for many years, the Regional Airport System Plan is updated at frequent intervals to reflect the changing behavior of air travel within the region and the changing nature of the aviation industry itself. The draft recommended plan contained in this document differs from the plan adopted in 1982 in the following ways:

- Population and economic growth forecasts for the region have been updated, extending to the year 2020.
- Forecasts of air carrier and general aviation demand have been updated and extended to the year 2020.
- The Bellevue, Issaquah and Duvall airfields have closed. The Cedar Grove airfield is facing potential closure.
- Some privately owned public-use airports have changed their status to private restricted use.
- Implementation of the process (established in the 1982 RASP) which may lead to development of a new general aviation airport has not proceeded.
- Sea-Tac is expected to reach its capacity before the end of the planning period.
- Policy recommendations related to helicopter, seaplane, and sport aviation facilities have been added.

- The reliance on capacity provided by privately owned airports has become more critical while their availability more uncertain.
- Master plans have been updated for Sea-Tac, Boeing Field, Tacoma Narrows Airport, Bremerton National Airport and Thun Field; updates are in progress for Renton Municipal Airport, Harvey Airfield, and Arlington Municipal Airport.
- The potential expansion of Paine Field has been inhibited by the decision of Snohomish County to allow residential and commercial development adjacent to the airport.

Many of the study findings and recommendations contained in this draft plan of 1988 are a result of the changes that have taken place within the larger context of the nation's aviation industry itself. Some of the more important or visible changes within the industry are as follows:

- deregulation of the air carrier industry, which in turn has resulted in --
 - * a hub-and-spoke patterned air transportation network
 - * increased frequency of flights, leading to the use of smaller aircraft and thus resulting in a significant increase in the volume of operations
 - * fluctuating price and service levels
- stabilized growth in the nation's general aviation fleet size
- emerging sport aviation industry
- emerging role of helicopters
- establishment of noise and flight track mitigation programs

AIR CARRIER AND GENERAL AVIATION RECOMMENDATIONS

In the following paragraphs, recommendations are given for the development and operation of the Puget Sound region's air carrier and general aviation airport system. The analysis that was undertaken to support these recommendations is contained in the body of this report and associated technical papers. Technical terms mentioned as part of the recommendations are defined in "Glossary of Airport System Planning Technology" in Appendix C of this document.

Briefly, it was found that Sea-Tac will be unable to accommodate future passenger demand levels, given its existing airside and landside capacity. Intolerable aircraft delays will occur within 10 to 15 years; therefore, alternative measures to alleviate this problem have been developed. On the general aviation side, new facilities may be needed during the study period and it is

essential that, at the least, the existing system of airports be preserved and maintained.

Air Carrier Recommendations

1. It is recommended that a decision-making process for the implementation of the following recommendations correspond to the time frame that is given in Attachment A (refer to page vii).
2. It is recommended that Airport Improvement Programs and local land use decisions affecting airport impact areas be guided by the facility and operational needs that pertain to the PSCOG regional projections of air passenger demand (refer to pages 19 and 21).
3. It is recommended that Master Plan updates be undertaken at the Paine Field, Bremerton National, Renton Municipal and Tacoma Narrows airports to prepare for (refer to pages 20-26, 41, 42 and reference 6):
 - a. their near term role as a base for increasing numbers of corporate, general aviation and training aircraft that regularly need airport instrument approach facilities;
 - b. the near term opportunities for implementing IFR training programs to help relieve Boeing Field practice approaches.
4. It is recommended that when updating their Master Plans, Paine Field, Bremerton National and Tacoma Narrows take steps to influence their local jurisdictional land use and transportation plans so as to preserve their potential role as satellite air carrier airports (refer to pages 20-26, 41, 42 and reference 6).
5. It is recommended that land use plans and building and zoning codes adequately regulate residential and other incompatible development within the vicinity of public-use and military airports (refer to pages 45-48 and reference 6).
6. It is recommended that the Port of Seattle and King County undertake an update of their 1983 Airspace Study to determine the following (refer to pages 20-26, 41, 46 and reference 6):
 - a. the physical and economic feasibility of upgrading and expanding Sea-Tac's runway system;
 - b. the future use of Boeing Field, and its relationship with Sea-Tac;
 - c. the need for another general aviation airport to relieve Boeing Field of the increasing demand to base corporate general aviation and training aircraft.

7. It is recommended that a planning study be conducted to (refer to pages 20-26, 42, 45-48, C-12 and reference 6):
 - a. search for tracts of land suitable to build a new satellite air carrier airport and/or a new major international air carrier airport; and
 - b. select the best tract(s) of land; and
 - c. prepare for landbanking these sites.
8. It is recommended that a planning study be conducted to examine what potential institutional authority may be required to manage the Puget Sound air transportation system in the future. It is further recommended that the investigation address and answer the legal, financial and political questions of implementing potential institutional authority alternatives.

General Aviation Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the decision-making process for the implementation of the following recommendations correspond to the time frame that is given in Attachment A (refer to page vii).
2. It is recommended that a high priority be attached to preserving, maintaining and improving existing general aviation airports in the region (refer to pages 29, 35-37, 43, 48-50, 64-67, Appendix B and reference 6).
3. It is recommended that land use plans, building and zoning codes adequately regulate residential and other incompatible development within the vicinity of general aviation airports (refer to pages 29, 35-37, 43, 48-50, 64-67, Appendix B and reference 6).
4. It is recommended that local jurisdictions support the establishment of an airport overlay zone surrounding the boundaries of general aviation airports to avoid incompatible land use development (refer to the model overlay zone in Appendix B).
5. It is recommended that local jurisdictions recognize the resources provided by public use general aviation airports by supporting property tax exemptions for those airports that are privately owned (refer to pages 29, 35-37, 43, 48-50, and 64-67).
6. It is recommended that, if a private airport is faced with closing its facilities to public use due to financial considerations, local government(s) examine the potential for saving those facilities through public acquisition or other support of that airport (refer to pages 29, 35-37, 43, 48-50, and 67).

7. It is recommended that the process (refer to page 43 and 44) relating to the feasibility, formation of an action plan for and possible construction of additional general aviation facilities in King County proceed, given:
 - The significant economic benefits for communities derived from general aviation airports (refer to page 49);
 - The projected unmet based aircraft demand in King County (refer to page 29 and 30 and reference 6); and
 - The impact of increasing airspace restrictions near the large urban airports (refer to pages 29, 41, 42 and reference 6).
8. It is recommended that when updating their Airspace Study, the Port of Seattle and King County adopt a regional perspective to address the impacts on general aviation and other elements of the airport system (refer to pages 29, 30, 41 and reference 6).

SPECIALIZED AIR TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Regional policy statements have been developed for the four specialized air transportation elements of the region's airport system: helicopters, seaplanes, privately owned airports and sport aviation. Regional Policy Statements provide broad guidance for the Puget Sound region in terms of the physical and operating requirements to serve these specialized modes of air transportation. Supplementing these policy statements are a set of implementation guidelines that are intended to provide local jurisdictions with options for addressing regional air transportation facility needs at the local level. Selecting any one (or more than one) of the proposed alternatives is expected to advance regional objectives for serving air transportation needs within the discretion of local government. A phased decision-making approach for implementation of the alternatives and guidelines is given in Attachment B.

The alternatives and implementation guidelines are discussed in the body of the report. The regional policy statements are given below.

Regional Policy Statement on Helicopter Facilities

Demand for helicopter services in the Puget Sound region is expected to double over the next fifteen years. Adequate physical facilities for helicopter service do not currently exist in the region, particularly in central city locations. The Puget Sound Council of Governments promotes a collective effort to provide helicopter landing facilities to the greatest practical extent in central city locations throughout the region.

Helicopter operators are experiencing increased demand for services, and are finding inadequate landing facilities to serve this demand. Local governments have the option of helping to define and shape how helicopter demand will be served in the future by taking a more active role in making decisions regarding helicopter facilities and operations (e.g., taking another look at restrictions in the Shoreline Management Plan in Seattle regarding proposed heliports on the waterfront).

Regional Policy Statement on Helicopter Operations

Helicopter traffic will increase as these services are more widely utilized for intercity travel in the region. The Puget Sound Council of Governments supports the use of helicopter operations management techniques in order to serve this increased demand with minimal community impacts.

Regional Policy Statement on Privately Owned Airports

Privately owned airports that are open to public use provide 30 to 40 percent of this region's basing capacity for general aviation. The Puget Sound Council of Governments supports the protection of these facilities through zoning for land use compatibility and through economic incentives, and support for liability insurance reforms which support those facilities available to the public.

Regional Policy Statement on Seaplane Base Facilities

Seaplane service is a specialized industry unique to the Northwest and Alaska. The Puget Sound Council of Governments supports protection of the seaplane industry and its required operating facilities.

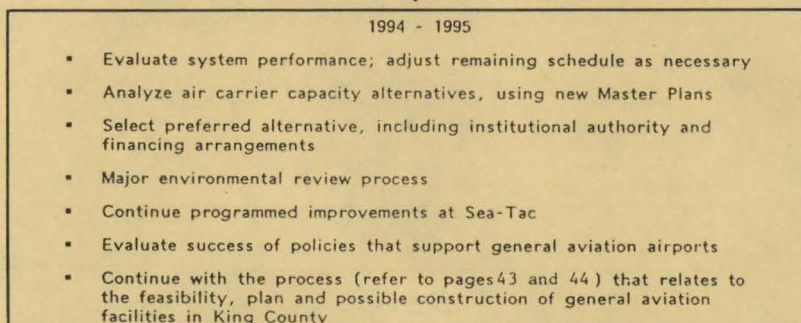
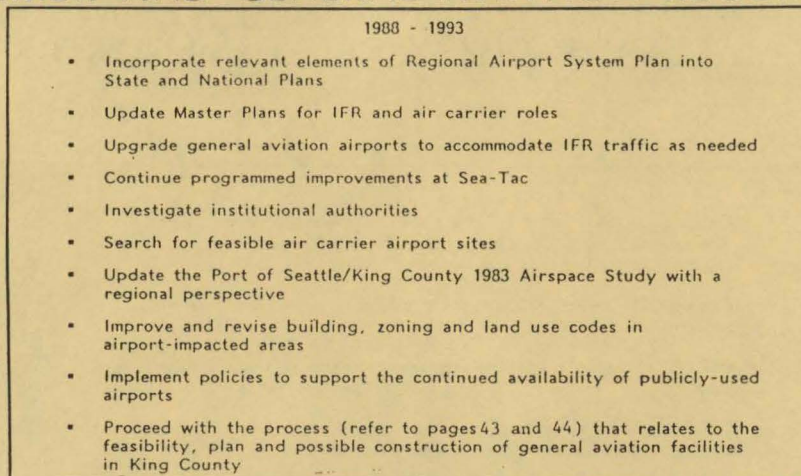
Regional Policy Statement on Seaplane Operations

Seaplane service is a specialized industry unique to the Northwest and Alaska. The Puget Sound Council of Governments supports a collective effort to protect the industry as well as affected communities by undertaking cooperative efforts to reduce negative impacts of seaplane operations on communities.

Regional Policy Statement on Sport Aviation

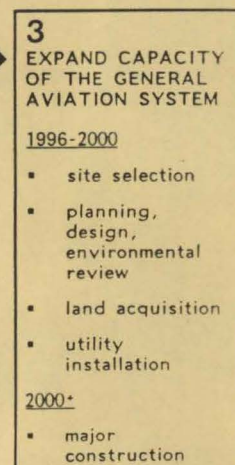
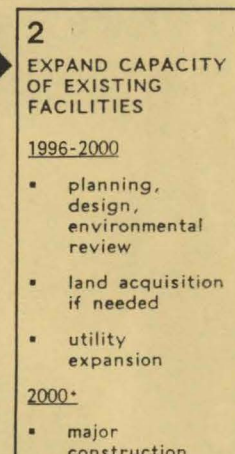
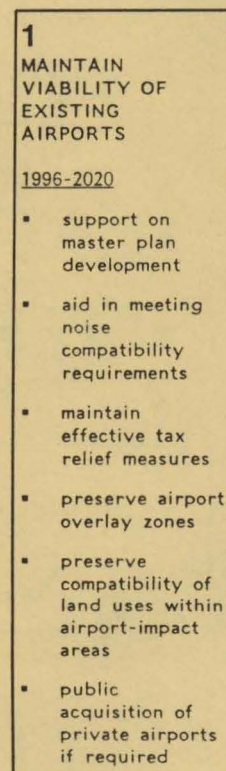
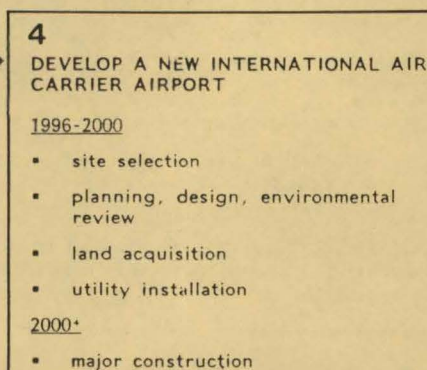
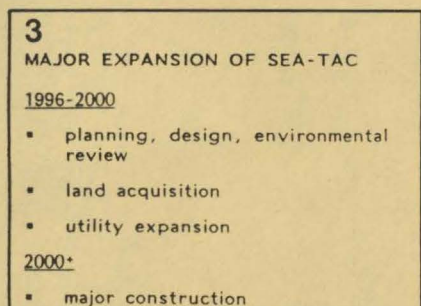
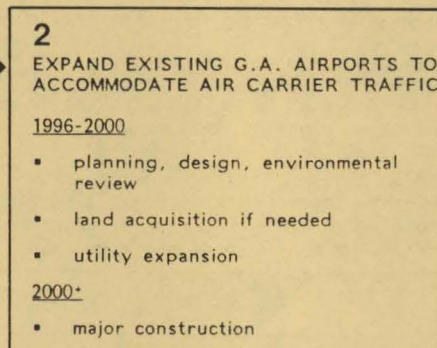
Sport aviation is a growing recreational activity in the Puget Sound region and has special physical and operating requirements. Insofar as sport aviation is like other public recreational activities, the Puget Sound Council of Governments supports a collective effort in the region to provide adequate physical and operating facilities for sport aviation activity to the greatest practical extent.

PHASED DECISION-MAKING APPROACH FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AIR CARRIER AND GENERAL AVIATION RECOMMENDATIONS



Air Carrier Alternatives

General Aviation Alternatives



ATTACHMENT B

PHASED IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIAL AIR FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1988-93

- Central cities (Seattle, Bellevue, Tacoma, Everett, Bremerton) adopt ordinance for helicopter landing facilities (Re: RASP Appendix A)
- Central cities/PSCOG identify suitable sites for downtown helistops
- PSCOG develop model helicopter operations impact mitigation plan
- Counties and appropriate cities adopt ordinance for airport overlay zone (Re: RASP Appendix B)
- Jurisdictions with existing public use seaplane bases (Seattle, Renton, Kenmore/King Co., Pierce Co.) adopt seaplane base overlay zone, including community impact mitigation guidelines
- Counties/PSCOG develop guidelines for location and operation of sport aviation facilities, incorporate in comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances as appropriate
- Continue evaluation of special air facility needs; adjust implementation schedule as necessary

1994-2000

- Evaluate air system performance; adjust implementation schedule as necessary
- Select final sites for downtown helistops, preserve locations
- Define air corridors for helicopter operations
- Develop downtown helistops as dictated by market demand
- Finalize helicopter operations impact mitigation plans; execute inter-local agreements as necessary
- Reevaluate need for new seaplane facilities
- Evaluate capacity potential of privately owned airports; adjust implementation schedule for new general aviation capacity
- Continue to address sport aviation needs and impact mitigation in local land use and recreation plans/ordinances; rely on private sector development and operation

2000-2020

- Evaluate air system performance; adjust implementation schedule as necessary
- Continue development of public use heliport/helistop system as dictated by market demand
- Develop new public use seaplane facilities if necessary to replace or supplement existing facilities
- Continue support for privately owned public use airports
- Evaluate capacity potential of privately owned airports; adjust implementation schedule for new general aviation capacity
- Continue to address sport aviation needs and impact mitigation in local land use and recreation plans/ordinances; rely on private sector for development and operation

