

SUMMARY PRESENTATION

SEA-TAC/COMMUNITIES PLAN

MAY 27, 1975

1-Q WHY WAS THE SEA-TAC/COMMUNITIES PLAN PROJECT UNDERTAKEN BY THE PORT OF SEATTLE AND KING COUNTY?

A- The Project was jointly authorized by the Port and the County in order to determine how best to achieve maximum compatibility between Sea-Tac International Airport and the surrounding environment.

2-Q WHAT TYPE OF PROBLEMS TRIGGERED THE NEED FOR THIS STUDY?

A- A number of problems associated with the present operation of Sea-Tac Airport were identified some two years ago in support of the need to develop a joint plan of improvement for the facility and the communities within which it is located. These problems, as pinpointed at that time, were as follows:

- Owners and occupants of residential properties near the Airport had become increasingly concerned about their exposure to the periodic annoyance of aircraft noise.
- Information about the nature and extent of such aircraft noise exposure was either unavailable or in dispute.
- In addition to fostering numerous lawsuits against the Port of Seattle, the aircraft noise situation had also prompted the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to withhold mortgage insurance commitments in certain areas near the Airport.
- Since the Sea-Tac installation had continued to grow and expand following its designation as a principle air carrier airport for the Seattle area in 1950, nearby property owners were apprehensive as to what additional land might be needed in future years.
- The combination of factors such as those cited above had produced a "Climate of Uncertainty" about property values and the real estate market in the Sea-Tac Airport area.
- Some concern was also expressed about the degree to which the Airport and other activities contributed to adverse air and water quality conditions in that part of King County.
- With regard to water-oriented issues, the periodic flooding in both Miller and Des Moines Creeks had represented a long-standing problem for King County and affected property owners.
- Several neighborhoods in the vicinity of Sea-Tac Airport relied on individual septic tanks to handle domestic wastes, a condition that was believed to affect the water quality of both creeks.

- The routing of State Route 509 below Des Moines Way, just to the south of Burien was unresolved at the time, as was improved access to the Airport from the south and the east.
- Age and obsolescence of structures, difficult area-wide economic conditions and a variety of other factors (some of which are mentioned above) had combined to produce blighted and deteriorating conditions in certain residential areas near Sea-Tac Airport. Among other things, this problem of declining neighborhoods threatened to affect property values, the tax base, and the ability of King County to furnish needed public facilities and services in future years.

3-Q WHO MAY BE EXPECTED TO EXPRESS AN INTEREST IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS?

A- Many different interest groups are now awaiting the conclusions and recommendations generated as a result of the Sea-Tac/Communities Plan. The list which follows represents some of the groups most directly affected by the Plan (other than the Port, County, or the FAA):

- The owners and/or occupants of properties situated within the Study area (1970 population of over 100,000 fulltime residents).
- The municipalities of Seattle, Des Moines and Normandy Park.
- The Highline School District
- Rainier Vista and Des Moines Sewer Districts
- King County Water Districts No. 75, 20 and 43
- King County Fire Districts No. 11, 2, 24 and 26
- The Zone Three Committee
- The airline companies which use Sea-Tac Airport or serve Sea-Tac Airport
- A variety of localized organizations (Community Council, Chamber of Commerce, Merchants Associations, etc.)

4-Q WHAT WAS THE OVERALL APPROACH FOLLOWED THROUGHOUT THE STUDY?

A- The Sea-Tac/Communities Plan has been so organized and managed as to 1) obtain all relevant information required to develop the desired Comprehensive Plan; 2) encourage full and meaningful participation by those persons affected by plan implementation; 3) permit every logical alternative to be fully considered; 4) provide a workable mechanism for the use of appropriate technical and advisory expertise; 5) emphasize practical ways and means to carry out the various recommendations derived by the Study; 6) comply with local State and Federal planning and grant procedures, as appropriate.

To accomplish these objectives, the Study Work Program has been conducted as follows:

- The Planning and Research Department of the Port of Seattle assumed responsibility for overall study direction and the development of a Master Plan for Sea-Tac International Airport acceptable to the FAA.
- The King County Department of Land Use Management, working through the Policy Development Commission (PDC), undertook all aspects of planning for the communities affected by the Airport, including an extensive and viable citizen participation effort.
- A host of special consultants performed a variety of tasks during the course of the Study. Full year measurements under all-weather, time, and seasonal conditions were made by these consultants relative to noise exposure, drainage and water quality, and air quality. In addition, community attitudes were surveyed and several airport-oriented planning assignments were carried out by consultant personnel.
- Both a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) were formed to assist the staff-consultant Study Team during all phases of the effort. These committees met on a monthly basis for most of the two-year work period and have contributed greatly to the evolution of a workable plan of improvement for the Airport and its environment.
- A wide-ranging spectrum of citizens contributed to the Study via workshops, seminars, "Town Hall" type meetings, special publications and other procedures, all of which were coordinated by a community office established in Burien. This office was manned by County and Port staff members, as well as by citizen volunteers.

5-Q WHAT FINDINGS CAN NOW BE STATED AS THE RESULT OF THIS PROJECT?

A- Of the dozens of findings that have been made by the technical and citizen participants in the Sea-Tac/Communities Plan Study, the following appear to be the most significant:

- The Airport site has adequate capability to accommodate foreseeable air traffic demand. No major expansion of the site is required.
- Noise exposure has peaked and, although expected to decrease with time, will remain a significant environmental problem in certain areas.
- Employment in the area, especially at the Airport or as related to Airport activities is increasing.
- Numerous property owners in the vicinity of Sea-Tac Airport are disturbed by the noise of aircraft operations and sincerely believe that they should receive some form of relief or compensation for this condition.

- Extensive acquisition of noise sensitive lands by the Port of Seattle (or some other governmental entity) could adversely affect the local tax base, the operation of certain special purpose districts (fire, water, sewer, school), and the overall integrity and cohesiveness of numerous neighborhoods in the vicinity of Sea-Tac Airport.
- The State of Washington does not currently have funds available for the purpose of assisting in the implementation of proposed noise remedy programs in the vicinity of Sea-Tac Airport.
- The general population of King County may not perceive any responsibility--especially from a tax dollar standpoint--to assist property owners who are (or claim to be) adversely affected by the Airport. The Battelle Community Attitudes Survey tended to confirm this possibility.
- Surface access to Sea-Tac Airport from the south eventually needs to be improved. Such improvement will be costly, complicated, and time consuming.
- West side access to the Airport is also a problem whose solution tends to create other problems--particularly with regard to the land area located between the Sea-Tac western boundary and Des Moines Way. The Sea-Tac/Communities Plan presents a workable approach to this problem.
- The kerosene-like odor produced in some instances and some locations as a result of aircraft operations can be experienced; however, feasible methods of "measuring" the extent of this odor and comparing such information against acceptable standards have not been developed as yet.
- Recent local and national economic conditions have affected some groups in the vicinity of Sea-Tac Airport more severely than others. This is particularly true of the retired elderly who live on small pensions and/or social security. As a consequence, funds for needed home or property improvements are often not available, a fact which tends to foster further blight and deterioration in some sections of the Sea-Tac Area.
- Solutions to the employee parking problem at Sea-Tac Airport include the development of remote facilities or the construction of additions to the present parking garage. However, both of these alternatives are costly: the former because of the need for a labor-intensive shuttle system, and the latter because of rapidly escalating building costs.
- Initiation of an extensive property owner assistance and information effort, coupled with positive actions by responsible public agencies relative to noise remedy programs, should result in a significant reduction in citizen fears and uncertainties within the Sea-Tac Study Area.

- Implementation of noise remedy and other proposed improvement programs should permit the Sea-Tac International Airport to function effectively as an important air carrier facility for at least the 20-year planning period (1973-1993) and beyond. This will forestall the need to build a second major airport in the Seattle Area for many years to come.
- The ability to clarify and better coordinate HUD/VA mortgage financing programs in the vicinity of Sea-Tac International Airport represents an immediate opportunity of benefit to all parties of interest.
- Ways and means to deal with periodic flooding along both Miller and Des Moines Creeks have been outlined. These solutions, if implemented, may be expected to improve safety, health, aesthetic, and environmental conditions associated with the two waterways. In turn, this would enhance existing land values, desirable neighborhood features, and the general well-being of affected property owners and/or their tenants.
- Approaches to new or future activities along and near the western boundary of Sea-Tac Airport have been identified; the suggested development patterns can be of considerable assistance to King County in the latter's efforts to bolster and improve the Burien area economy.
- Land areas that need to be acquired to the north and south of Sea-Tac Airport as part of noise remedy programs should be used for bona fide public purposes (open space, recreation, community facilities) to the maximum extent feasible.
- Both the enhancement and protection of existing residential neighborhoods can be accomplished via implementation of suggested noise remedy programs. As a consequence, many schools, special districts, and other public facilities of value to the Sea-Tac/Communities Area can be retained and even strengthened.

6-Q WHAT ARE THE KEY RECOMMENDATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED BY THE STUDY TEAMS?

A- Summary of Key recommendations include:

1. The Port of Seattle and King County should formally recognize the Plan as the official guide for future development and improvement by the Sea-Tac/Communities Area. This recognition should be accomplished by resolution, ordinance or other such appropriate action.
2. The Port Commission should adopt the suggested Sea-Tac International Airport Master Plan and Improvement Program with the concurrence of the Federal Aviation Administration.
3. The County Council should adopt the Sea-Tac/Communities Plan as the official Middle Plan for this portion of King County.

4. The Port of Seattle should assume primary responsibility for the implementation of a comprehensive noise remedy program as outlined by the Sea-Tac/Communities Plan. Such a program would involve property acquisition, purchase assurance, noise insulation, aviation easements, and property advisory services. Maximum FAA financial assistance via the Airport Development Aid Program (ADAP) should be obtained by the POS.
5. King County should assume primary responsibility for the implementation of drainage, water quality, park and recreation program improvements identified as part of the Sea-Tac Communities Plan. Both the Port and County should work closely with the State Highway Department and other transportation agencies in the planning, programming and execution of needed service, road and/or access improvements.
6. King County should assume primary responsibility for the implementation of overall land use change within Conversion and Reinforcement Areas as identified and outlined by the Plan.
7. Future land use conversions in appropriate areas around the Sea-Tac Airport should be oriented to, and result in, a more economic use of property, an increased tax base, improved job opportunities, and a greater use of available community facilities wherever possible.
8. Every effort should be made to have HUD/FHA reflect the Plan in its mortgage insurance policies and practices.
9. The Port and County should seek necessary changes in the Federal ADAP legislation (now under consideration by the Congress) which would (a) increase the Federal share of such grants, and (b) permit ADAP funding of the various noise remedy programs set forth in the Sea-Tac/Communities Plan.
10. The Port of Seattle should seek necessary changes in the Washington Aircraft Noise Impact Abatement Act of 1974 so as to permit noise remedy and other improvement programs reflected by the Plan to be fully implemented. Change is particularly needed with respect to the area subject to the provisions of this Act.
11. The Port and County should adopt a Post-Plan Coordination Program to include, as a minimum:
 - o property advisory services
 - o citizen information activities
 - o monitoring of noise exposure, air quality and water quality conditions, as well as progress in the implementation of the Sea-Tac/Communities Plan
 - o investigation of funding and program implementation responsibility for recommended actions of the Plan.
12. Both the Port of Seattle and King County should agree to fulfill staffing and budgetary needs required to carry out the Plan as appropriate, and in keeping with available resources.

7-Q HOW CAN THIS PLAN BE IMPLEMENTED?

A- Basically, implementation would be coordinated through normal administrative mechanisms of the involved agencies. The Port, for example, is already embarked on a property acquisition program that corresponds somewhat to the Plan's recommendations. Additional programs will require upgraded administration staffing and budgeting and the Plan's cost estimates will reflect these requirements. Some community facility needs can be accommodated by adjusting the County Capital Improvement Program accordingly. Most programs depend, to some extent, on new sources of financing, some entirely. Most important will be the need for both the agencies - the Port and County - to maintain a close working relationship via a coordinated program. For some aspects of the ongoing program this will require formal joint management where both the airport operator's role and the role of general purpose local government have a direct bearing on program success.

Parts of the recommended programs can be undertaken quickly. Others must await financial opportunities to become clarified. Responsible agencies will not be asked for sweeping authorizations but rather for approval of individual measures consistent with the adopted overall Plan as such measures become possible. An ongoing monitoring program would, however, be active, to insure that no unnecessary delays are introduced.

8-Q HOW WILL THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY HELP...

- a. THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE?
- b. OWNERS AND OCCUPANTS OF AFFECTED PROPERTY?
- c. THE PORT OF SEATTLE?
- d. KING COUNTY?
- e. SIMILAR AIRPORT/ENVIRONS SITUATIONS ELSEWHERE?

A-(a). The community as a whole in the vicinity of Sea-Tac Airport should become more stable, more livable and more desirable in many ways if the Plan evolved by the Study is effectively carried. A large number of citizens who have already participated in this effort possess a new awareness of, and respect for, the local governmental process. Others who may take part in the future should obtain similar benefits. All in all, this Project and resulting plan of improvements seems to be one of those rare public undertakings where the pluses heavily outweigh the minuses.

A-(b). Long-standing uncertainties about the future that may exist in the minds of owners and occupants of the property affected by the Airport should be eliminated as a result of this study. In addition to having access to valid, factual information about noise exposure and other problems, such owners and occupants should be pleased with the various improvement programs that have been developed for their use and benefit.

- A-(c). The Port of Seattle will not only have a detailed plan to guide the future operation and improvement at Sea-Tac International Airport as an end product of the study, but it will also have a comprehensive procedure for dealing with the aircraft noise problem. As a consequence, the Port should experience fewer lawsuits and greater public support for its various policies and practices.
- A-(d). King County will also have the ability to accomplish many worthwhile objectives as a result of the study findings and recommendations. Needed public improvements such as parks, drainage projects, roads, and recreation facilities and so on can and should be carried out in accordance with the Sea-Tac/Communities Plan. These and other actions designed to enhance and reinforce existing residential areas should permit the County to improve property values, stabilize the tax base, and fulfill its various service functions in an efficient manner.
- A-(e). Airport sponsors in other parts of the United States and elsewhere are now awaiting final results of this Sea-Tac/Communities Plan study. As a prototype for FAA, this study represents one of the most comprehensive efforts of its kind ever undertaken. Since almost every major air carrier airport is beset with the same type of community environmental problems as Sea-Tac, the Plan that has been developed is naturally of great interest to others. Moreover, some of the unique findings of this study could well result in significant legislative changes at the Federal level of government.

9-Q HOW WILL THE VARIOUS PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS BE PAID FOR?

- A- Many of the Plan's recommendations can be financed by normal sources used for such purposes. The bulk on-Airport improvements, for example, fall into this category. Funds generated by user charges will continue to be applied to needed improvements. In a similar fashion, many community improvement programs can be carried out by King County through normal budgetary processes that apply, for example, to parks, streets and arterials, etc.

On the other hand, there will be requirements for funds not readily available at present. In the case of the Noise Remedy Programs along with some of the desired airport improvements, considerable increases in the FAA's ADAP (Airport Development Assistance Program) will be needed. Congress is currently reviewing an expanded application of this trust fund and we are hopeful that the necessary level of support will be forthcoming. Without it, these programs simply cannot be accomplished in any reasonable length of time.

Other sources of potential funding must be pursued. At present there is no funding applicable to a comprehensive storm drainage program as outlined in the Sea-Tac Plan. Methods such as a drainage utility are potential solutions and must be examined further.

10-Q WHAT MAY HAPPEN IF THE PLAN IS NOT CARRIED OUT?

- A- Full implementation of the Sea-Tac/Communities Plan as presented should produce many benefits to all parties of interest. On the other hand, failure to carry out the Plan could result in--
- o further deterioration or residential areas in the vicinity of Sea-Tac International Airport.
 - o continued and perhaps increased noise-oriented litigation against the Port of Seattle,
 - o reduced property values and thus the tax base over time, thereby affecting the Port and County and local utility districts ability to provide needed facilities and services,
 - o unhappy and frustrated property owners, taxpayers, and voters in this part of King County, and
 - o the possible need to finance and build a new air carrier airport at some other location within the four-county Puget Sound region prior to 1990. A combination of adverse litigation and imposed restrictions on aircraft operations could conceivably produce such a need. If so, the cost of building such a facility from the ground up could easily be as much as one-half to one billion dollars--provided that an environmentally-acceptable site could be found and acquired for use as a major public airport.