

DRAFT REPORT OF THE LAND USE COMMITTEE  
SEA-TAC COMMUNITIES PLAN

I. ASSIGNMENT:

The assignment of the King County Policy Development Commission's Land Use Committee has been to monitor the Sea-Tac Communities Plan process and insure that appropriate levels of community involvement have been maintained throughout.

II. INTRODUCTION:

A. PROJECTED ~~ED~~ OBJECTIVES AND REQUIREMENTS

In December of 1972, the Port of Seattle and King County applied for and received a grant of 640,000 dollars from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to assist in the joint development of a master plan for the Sea-Tac International Airport and a companion plan for that portion of King County most directly affected by the Airport's presence and operation. The following four major objectives were identified:

*To concurrently develop a Comprehensive Master Plan for Sea-Tac International Airport and to develop an airport vicinity plan which together improved the relationships between the Airport and surrounding environs.*

*To incorporate detailed environmental inventories into the study such that all relevant environmental factors are assured full and careful consideration.*

*To proceed in a manner which fully addresses the advantages and disadvantages associated with each and every potential viable plan alternative and provide for adequate public involvement in all such deliberation.*

*To develop final recommendations soundly based on all pertinent technical, economic, social, environmental and financial factors, which provide for the adoption of specific implementation policies on behalf of the Port of Seattle, King County and other appropriate agencies including the Federal Aviation Administration.*

The FAA grant required that the project conform to four specific phases. Phase I provided for data collection and forecasting. Phase II "Site Selection" was not a major work segment of the study. Phase III represented the basic planned development portion of the project. Using the data provided by Phase I, a series of airport and vicinity plans were developed while some alternative plans were required for the Airport proper, much more emphasis was placed on the development of alternative plans for the airport vicinity portion of the study. Finally, during Phase IV, a composite package of viable plan alternatives concerning both the Airport proper and the vicinity was assembled. The alternatives were presented to the communities and analyzed in terms of feasibility, financing, implementation, least cost, and cost effectiveness to select a viable action program which materially addresses airport/vicinity relations. The King County Council and the Seattle Port Commission must both adopt the Phase IV Airport and vicinity plan to implement its proposal.

#### B. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

The dual jurisdictional approach to this project resulted in an organization and structure consisting of officials from both King County and the Port of Seattle and from various consultants.

To report and recommend to both the King County Council and the Seattle Port Commission, a Policy Advisory Committee was created by King County, Port of Seattle, and FAA. This Committee included administrators from the Port of Seattle, King County, and project consultant firms. Other members were citizens representing the Zone 3 Committee, the Highline Community Council, the King County Policy Development Commission, and the community at large. During the plan process, the Policy Advisory Committee performed what would normally be the traditional role of the PDC Land Use Committee in planning efforts involving King County only. However, because of the unique dual jurisdictional administration of the project, the Land Use Committee concentrated its efforts on monitoring and evaluating the Community Involvement Program.

At the outset, the Sea-Tac Communities Plan was to concurrently accomplish both the contracted element (i.e., the Airport and Vicinity Plan), and community plans for surrounding communities not necessarily within the study area. As it was, the contracted element of the studies consumed all available manpower. Now that the contracted element is nearing completion, community planning for surrounding communities is proceeding. During this second stage, King County will have sole jurisdiction, and the PDC will undertake its traditional assignment.

### III. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT CERTIFICATION

#### A. Nature of the Community.

The area encompassed by the plan process can be characterized as a community without consensus. The community involvement program uncovered incredible levels of frustration and conflict. Not only has the community experienced frustration in dealing with King County and the Port of Seattle, but has also exhibited extreme conflict levels among its organizations and individual spokesmen. The public meeting conducted at the outset of the plan was the first indicator of conflict and frustration within the community. At that meeting, over 800 irate residents released a torrent of discontent, both with the Port and the County, and among themselves.

The Community Involvement Program responded to these circumstances by emphasizing, in its structure and activities, resolution of conflict. Functioning in an atmosphere of anger and distrust is not easy; the fact that the Sea-Tac Communities Plan Community Involvement Program has been as extensive, and has operated as successfully as it has, is testimony to the dedication of hundreds of citizens and the staff. The Program provided a forum in which King County and Port of Seattle officials and community residents could start talking to one another and begin to understand the position and problems of each. This brought about a reduction of distrust and afforded opportunities for channeling frustration into communications.

## B. STRUCTURE, PROCESS, OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.

Introduction. The community involvement program was carried out under the general direction of the Policy Development Commission. The PDC appointed one of its members to serve on the Policy Advisory Committee and assigned the Land Use Committee to oversee community involvement activities. Early in the project the Land Use Committee adopted the following objectives as operational guidelines for the program:

- a. Promote community interest and awareness of the study.
- b. Include citizen participants in the operations of the Community Involvement Program.
- c. Maximize public understanding of technical studies.
- d. Stimulate and respond to community questions, concerns, and ideas.
- e. Promote community expression of views on study activities and Plan Alternatives.

The intent of the Land Use Committee was, rather than attempt to represent the community, to join in partnership with it. The Committee acted as a catalyst for the initial organization of the program and stimulated interaction among the Community Involvement Program participants, the technical staffs and the Policy Advisory Committee.

Community Involvement Office. At the beginning of the study a local office was opened to serve as a focal point for community involvement for the duration of the project. The office has been managed by the community planner previously established in the area by the Division of Land Use Management; the community planner also served as community involvement coordinator. A full time planner from the Port of Seattle, two part time assistants, and many citizen volunteers have assisted in community functions at various times

throughout the study. The establishment of a community office not only provided a visible sign of commitment to the community, but also served as a vital communication, information and activity center throughout the program.

A loan library was established to provide more information to the community. The office also served as a place for individuals to obtain information about the STCP. Members of other community organizations came to the community office for information for their organizations. When <sup>there were</sup> mailings or other activities that citizens could assist in, they would willingly come in and help. The community office was also a place where the citizen did vent his frustration and anger, about the project, the government, his neighbor, and just about any thing else they had on their mind.

Initiation of Community Involvement. The study was announced in metropolitan newspapers, in community newspapers and to community organizations. Further, all the property owners (36,000) in the airport study area, received letters from the Division of Land Use Management (which provides staff assistance to the PDC) inviting their attendance at one of the initial two public meetings held to explain the purpose of the project. Also included was a questionnaire asking whether the recipient wished to participate in the Community Involvement Program or simply be kept informed on study progress.

The first two public meetings were attended by over 1,000 citizens. They were urged to fill out the questionnaire and over 400 did so. These people in turn received a second questionnaire asking them to state their

preferred area of activity and involvement. From these responses, two general activity areas were defined: 1) Airport and noise, and 2) Urban development and water quality. This provided the basis for subsequent formation of air transportation and urban development subcommittees.

These two Sub-Committees were the focal points of citizen involvement for the first six months of the project. Each was chaired by a member of the PDC Land Use Committee, with a community co-chairman. Membership on the two Sub-Committees exceeded 60. As the two sub-committees were taking shape, there were problems getting organized. There was the distrust<sup>s</sup>, the hostility, frustration, expressed by some of the participants. The problems of not really having much citizen activity, waiting for the inventory to be done by the staff.

The sub-committees, in the beginning, were to review the work done by staff, and it was a problem and source of real irritation for the community to have to start over each time new participants came to the meeting. Hearing the same gripes over and over again, i. e. "The damn planes are so loud I can't hear<sup>the</sup> T.V.". "The vibrations are shaking my house to bits and pieces."

Each sub-committee met on a regular basis; each defined its purpose and objectives. The two sub-committees reviewed technical presentations and studies, coordinated citizen efforts, developed action plans, performed studies, made recommendations, developed programs of benefit to the broader community, and organized special task forces. This early activity induced people to participate; frustrations were released and a general cooling down occurred; allowing community processes to become effective.

As the committees began to become more familiar with the staff and the information available, certain activities were needed to help the major sub-committees function better. So task forces were formed, such as Administrative Task Force for Air Transportation, and Program Planning for Community Development. These groups met with the staff to plan for the meetings, to assist in news releases, and other duties as the need arose.

Some fifteen separate citizen task forces were formed at various times to discuss specific problem areas, and provide advice to project administration. Task forces met during the first six months of the study and reported their findings to the two sub-committees. The task forces served as catalysts to successfully broaden the base of community involvement. The task forces brought the community together with representatives of all government agencies involved.

While data were being collected, people would express concern that certain information was being overlooked, so they would get together to find out information, to write letters, talk to agencies to try and bring that information back to the major committee. Some examples of these task forces were the Historic Task Force, the Near Term Task Force, Real Estate & Taxes Task Force. Sometimes the task force would be only two or three persons. The Real Estate & Taxes Task Force wrote letters to banks and lending agencies to try and get an assessment of lending and mortgage policies around the Airport. The Near Term Task Force wrote letters to the Washington Congressional delegation attempting to get funds for acquisition. The Historic Task Force wanted to assure that the planning effort included the history of the area.



These groups met as often as needed to meet their objectives. This type of activity was effective, because it utilized the expertise of those citizens in the areas of their speciality. It also gave individuals a sense of accomplishment, when one of their objectives was met.

As data collection progressed, the staff would ask citizens to assist in activities that would provide feelings, ideas, and information about the community. One such technique was the memory sketch or aesthetic inventory. Using a map and a given set of symbols, individuals were asked to put their impressions of the community they lived in on the map. Citizens used a variety of ways to express their likes and dislikes about their neighborhoods. A teacher would use a smiley face; others were very verbal; still others would blot out what they disliked. The participants were enthusiastic about the idea that the individual impressions would be looked at. They were not always sure how these feelings would be used. After being involved in a memory sketch session, many participants reported back that they took a new look at their neighborhood. Including the community workshops, about 160 persons participated in the inventory. Very few were task force members, in some cases this was the only contact they had with the Sea-Tac Communities Plan.

Community Schools Workshops. Three half-hour video-tape programs on the environmental studies -- noise, water quality, and land use --- were produced by staff, citizens, and local audio-visual experts. This special activity was funded by King County and the Port of Seattle, exclusive of FAA

funding. Titled "Your 2 cents worth", these video-tape presentations were used as part of the Highline School District's Community Schools (Adult Education) Program. The presentations addressed new audiences further broadening community involvement, and stimulated more discussion of community problems and alternatives. The six week offering was attended by 150 participants, the largest enrollment for a single series of classes in the history of the community schools programs. Each segment was built around a particular issue, with information from available sources, such as the PDC, the League of Women Voters, EPA. Each participant packet included a questionnaire/worksheet for discussion purposes.

Week #1 "Silence Is Golden" using the audio visual film, case springboard for discussion, citizens discussed noise in the home, outside the home, also the importance of the airport in the community. Some examples of comments from the groups. Noise outside the home: traffic, helicopters, planes, children. Noise inside the home: rock music, TV, vacuums, children. One comment "can only control noise in the home". Importance of airport to community, economically vital, "Keep community up to date on airport growth and activities".

Week #2 "Urban Streams, a Hard Look" again using one of the 30 films as a basis for discussion. There appeared to be concern about the preservation of natural streams, bogs, and lakes. This feeling was apparent at all of the sessions. Some comments "Keep streams natural, for fishing, educational uses, access only by walking - NO CAMPING". "Areas now available should remain available". Part of this segment was field trips along the Miller and Des Moines Creek.

Week #3 Aesthetic Inventory. Again the memory sketch technique was used with the workshop participants. The earlier session were a group or groups of individual selected at random from the entire community. The workshop participants had been together as a group for several sessions, in some cases were old friends. However, the perception and the comments were not all that different. A high school class at Mt. Rainier who also participated, their comments were similar, with the exception of local hangouts for young people. In all cases the citizens used a variety of expressions to convey their feeling. Some comments, "Des Moines Way tacky", "Beautiful Down town Burien---Ugh" and one comment from a Des Moines resident, "Unlimited sky, lovely, cherished for blueness, stars, sun, rain, snow and gentle winds as far as I can see".

Workshop #4 "Community Planning, A Game" using the third audio visual task force film, with Port and County planners to answer questions. The workshop participants began to zero in on land use planning. Included in the workshop packet was the League of Women Voters pamphlet "Land Use Local Decisions". Participants were asked to visit local and county government meetings, i.e., school board, city council, county council and report back to the group. Some concerns, lack of interagency cooperation, lack of response from agencies, control. Some comments, "Watch dog the people who are running our community", "Controls don't work unless we make them work, people should establish controls and see that they work."

Workshop #5 Decision Makers, A number of elected official were asked to attend these workshops and discuss the decision making process. Many of the elected officials invited and who accepted did not show up. Those who

did find the participants very vocal about the distrust of government in general and lack of satisfaction in getting information from agencies. Some comments, "We need to consider a system that will get government out into the community, so officials will know what the public wants and not just lobbyist wants".

Workshop #6 Alternative Futures, this was the final session. It was intended to define preferences which would help in the study process. Each participant was given an evaluation and interest questionnaire. Most of the citizens felt that the workshops were worthwhile, and many became active task force participants in Phase II. Those who signed up attended most of the sessions, however, because of interest in what might happen to Military Road, a large number turned up at the Valley View workshops, and as a result formed their neighborhood group.

24,000 brochures plus a clip and mail notice in the three local newspapers was used to inform the community of these workshops. The workshops were primarily to involve the community with the STCP.

About 150 persons signed up for the workshops and it is estimated that about 50 more dropped <sup>IN</sup> with a friend <sup>or</sup> a spouse bringing along someone from their family. The ideas from these workshops was one of the sources of future policy for the STCP. Some examples, "Landscape edges of airport", "provide viewing areas to see airport activities." "Sports and recreation around the airport", and "Sound insulation."

People Power. "How Would You like to Sleep with a 747?" was the provocative title of a television program produced as a public affairs function of one of Seattle's local TV stations. In conjunction with the presentation, surveys had been conducted and the results were discussed during the airing of the program. The intent of this effort was to acquaint the greater metropolitan area with the Sea-Tac Communities Plan, and to gather additional opinion through the survey. (See Appendix<sup>3</sup>) Sea-Tac citizens were involved in the planning and design of the questionnaire and the TV program. Of over 15,000 questionnaires<sup>were</sup> distributed, more than 1,000 were returned -- an unusually good response.

Six Month Report. At the end of Phase I, the results of community involvement activities of the first six months were published in a report entitled: "I. Community Perceived Image, II. Community Expressed Concerns." This report indicated to the community that their concerns had been heard and noted and, although an interim report, it was visible evidence of their efforts.

Phase III Committee Formation. With the publication of the six month report, Phase III was initiated. (Phase II "Site Selection" by the Port of Seattle did not involve the community.) Participating citizens divided into four committees according to their primary interests: urban development, water quality and drainage, airport planning, or noise abatement. The committees worked to define community needs, desires, and institutional constraints.

These were translated into program ideas and combined into compatible sets. These in turn were examined and critiqued by the analysis task force. The task force staff and members citizens reviewed suggested programs and sent recommendations back to the originating committee.

By this time the citizens had begun to appreciate and understand the interests of others. They had begun to expand their own interest in the entire community. The citizens and staff began the process of getting organized and trying to sift through and identify ideas that would be evaluated.

Each special task force would sift through ideas at one meeting and then the analysts (citizens from each task force and staff) would then go through each idea and also rate the ideas. Then the task force would review the ideas. Sometimes there were several meetings in a week relating to a series of ideas. Many times after much discussion, several choices would be combined to become a goal. ~~An objective with still more ideas.~~ The task forces really were expressive, individuals were willing to pursue an idea. Strong feeling was expressed about individual preferences. The real commitment from the community was apparent when most of these citizens were at the task force meeting of their specific interest and many were at other task force meetings also. The average attendance for this series of meetings was 15 at each meeting. The smallest task force was Airport Planning. Eventually this group combined with the noise group. The largest was Community Planning, with Water Quality running a close second. Forty one persons expressed interest in the Community Planning task force and many more attended meetings and obtained information from the community office.

The Community Planning task force started in January to work through possible program choices from the Concerns Survey, for example, "noise impact <sup>areas</sup> should be a golf course, a political unit within the confines of Sea-Tac Community to control land use by a vote of property owners, a sign ordinance for Burien, more emphasis given to undergrounding wires." From the Memory Sketch came ideas -- "Park Lake should be torn down, Establish historic district around Sunnydale, Preserve swamp at Des Moines Way S. and S. 176th." Miscellaneous ideas came from individuals through the community office, other meetings and etc., such as "Grant tax breaks to individual businesses for an aesthetically pleasing appearance, Require P.O.S. to return some tax dollars to schools for property lost in property acquisitions." Many of these ideas were eventually dropped or combined with others.

At the initial meeting of the community planning task force, there were 110 possible program choices to work through. Each was an idea that someone wanted promoted. These were the meetings which ran very late. The individual involvement was intense and many times the patience of other participants would wear thin. The citizens really complained when the meetings would get repetitious. However, the groups began to handle certain members when they considered them disruptive.

It was evident at these meetings that <sup>ce</sup> consensus was taking place and priorities were being established. However there were those who were in disagreement with some of the priorities that were being established by the group and there was sometimes impatience while new persons were

brought up to date. Many times a person would come to one meeting, complain, and then leave. To the citizens who were working week after week this caused real frustration. They wanted to work through to a solution and not be just a center for complaints. Although they too were quick to do their own complaining if the staff got off of the groups priority.

Each of the four task forces used the same format. They had resources and consultants in each special area. All program choices were published for each task force.

This iterative process resulted in the refining of alternative plans for the future of the Sea-Tac area eventually reaching consensus.

Newspaper Tabloid Insert. The preferred alternative plans were presented to the community in a <sup>newspaper</sup> supplement entitled, "Where are we going?" included in four local newspapers with circulation totalling 70,000. The supplement explained the several alternatives and requested the readers to submit their reactions on an attached questionnaire. Unfortunately, responses were not sufficient to reliably indicate trends in community opinion. However, the questionnaire did result in input from people who had been previously uninvolved in the program.

Phase IV Committee Formation. Applying the plan alternatives to the study area was the major task IV. The participants regrouped into four new committees representing the geographical areas north, south, east, and west of the airport. These geographic committees committed conducted meetings <sup>for</sup> in their respective areas to gauge the impact of the proposed alternatives on



specific neighborhoods. Citizen desires were then translated into implementation proposals and alternatives. By this time trust and respect between the community and planners was becoming neutral.

Other Citizen Involvement Activities. To provide the community maximum access to information about the project, news letters and "fact sheets" on various studies and phases of the project were sent periodically to over 1500 residents. Articles in the local newspapers also appeared frequently describing progress on the project. Open house was held on several occasions at the community office to encourage viewing of displays and to provide information. Additionally, ~~several~~ field trips were arranged by staff to introduce interested citizens to various problem areas in the community.

<sup>first</sup> In the summer months most of the organization of task forces was taking place. While there was still dissent, many of the citizens were eager to do something. They were reaching out, learning to understand other needs and concerns. There was discussion about ways to pull the group together. They were wanting to know others in the task forces better. In September, '73 a potluck picnic was held at Sunset park. All Port and County candidates were asked to attend. Many staff, elected officials and about 120 citizens attended. It was the first informal meeting and appeared to serve as a vehicle to become better acquainted.

The next informal attempt was the Christmas open house. While only about 50 persons came, it was a place for informal exchange of information and ideas. The various members of the task forces brought refreshments, helped with decoration.

Approximately 300 citizens were actively involved in the project; some 220 working meetings were held. The number of meetings was not pre-planned at the onset of the project, mostly because of the form of participation was in large part to be defined by the people involved. Most of the working meetings were relatively small, with five to fifteen persons attending. Bi-monthly committee meetings typically drew 25 to 40 persons.

#### ~~C. PROCESS EVALUATION~~

(This section of the report is not yet ready.)

#### D. CITIZEN IMPACT ON THE PLANNING PROCESS.

King County and the Port of Seattle have not shared, in their respective planning processes, a common view of the appropriate role for citizens. Traditionally, the Port of Seattle has not solicited citizen input for their planning and decision making. However, the very citizens adjacent to the Airport have caused the Port to recently seek more participation by people in the area. On the other hand, King County Division of Land Use Management, which provides staff support for the PDC, has had substantial prior experience working with communities. A community planner was established in the area prior to the study and served as a vital link between citizens and decision makers, often acting as an advocate for community interests at the staff level. This provided the people with more access to information and more ability to influence the decision making process.

The four citizen representatives on the Policy Advisory Committee had a similar effect: the policy makers received direct input from citizens and accounted to the community through the citizen representatives.

Citizen activities in the Community Involvement Program focused on those aspects of the project which directly affect the community: noise, water quality and run-off, and land use. In this program, citizens and staff work together to develop information and education programs for the larger community. They surveyed community opinion, and translated citizen opinions and concerns into recommended goals and programs for community and agency consideration.

Citizens have influenced the planning process in the Sea-Tac project in several ways. Fundamental planning directions for the study area were developed by the processes described in this report of citizen involvement. One of the most dramatic effects of citizen influence was the decision by the Port of Seattle to proceed immediately to develop acquisition plans for areas immediately adjacent to the Airport and other areas heavily impacted by Airport operations, instead of waiting until completion of the project to do so. Still another benefit is new pressure to establish and maintain on-going citizen involvement processes. King County already has a community planner assigned to the area. The Port of Seattle has recently also established a community office: initially, to assist in the acquisition process, and later to provide a link between the community and the Port of Seattle.

While there seems to be acceptance of the resulting concepts and plans, there still exists the feeling that has been expressed throughout the study, "The information is good, but what are you going to do with it?" The answer of course is the same as it has been from the beginning of the study: The people must tell their elected representatives that these are the programs they want.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

As is documented by this report, community involvement has been a thorough and continuing element of the Sea-Tac Communities Plan. It has demonstrated to the community and to the public agencies working together on the plan, the means by which concerned forces in a community can work together toward establishing appropriate goals and the means for moving together toward their realization. The Land Use Committee is pleased to confirm the achievement as described in this ~~section of the Sea-Tac Communities Plan~~ report.