

September 13, 1981

Editor-Highline Times

It is disturbing to hear that there are residents within our community who feel that the land north of Sea Tac Airport BELONGS to them--- the area designated since the early 70's as the "Interim Land Acquisition" and is now being called the "proposed" North Sea Tac Park.

For those who have forgotten, the homes in this area were purchased by the Port of Seattle to remove the people from an environmentally unacceptable neighborhood. High noise was causing unhappy people and innumerable law suits. The POS made the statement that the land was unfit for residential use under any circumstances. The FAA stated from the beginning that the acquisition was to provide safety areas for Sea Tac Airport. At that time they also said that if Sunset Junior High School was purchased with federal participation then they would not allow such a use to continue. The Port now owns most of the land, with the aid of federal monies in their purchase program. Consequently, the Sea Tac Communities Plan was developed with this in mind!

Recreation has always been a prime use proposed for the north acquisition area as stated in the STCP---and with the blessings of the POS and the FAA it CAN happen. BUT-the land does come under certain land use guidelines because of its location to the airport. The FAA has the responsibility to protect the planes and their passengers and crews, and in doing this, density guidelines (numbers of people per acre) have been set for critical areas. To me, this safety area is reasonable. It allows practice fields for numerous sports but restricts the use of the land to spectators (assemblies of people). The FAA's density guidelines were approved by community organizations (including recreational groups), the POS Commissioners, and King County when they endorsed the North Sea Tac Park Plan. The Greater Highline Communities Park Board signed a master lease for 55 acres of land within those guideline lands--NOW they are screaming UNFAIR!

A State Representative has said "At the present time the FAA guidelines of people density in the NSTP seems to be a "cog in the wheels" of park development.*****However, it is possible to plan and develop a park around the guidelines, as shown in the NSTP Master Plan.

It would be a shame to have to ask for statistics on the numbers of planes "in trouble" when landing or taking off at Sea Tac. Ones that might have needed a place to land "off the ~~field~~ ^{runway}". We don't expect a plane to "fall out of the sky", but we now have the opportunity to give them the space they might some day need and with less risk of hurting others.

The FAA has the authority to request the Port of Seattle to see that the guidelines are followed "within the spirit and intent". IF violations persist, we could see our park lands developed into warehousing!

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