



**COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

Item No. 8a

ACTION ITEM

Date of Meeting December 15, 2020

DATE: June 23, 2020

TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM: Laurel Dunphy, Director Airport Operations
Mark Coates, Senior Manager Airport Operations
Steve Osmek, Manager Airport Wildlife

SUBJECT: Authorization to Advertise and Award a Contract to Support the Mandatory Airport Wildlife Hazard Management Program

Amount of this request: \$3,500,000

Total estimated contract cost: \$3,500,000

ACTION REQUESTED

Request Commission authorization for the Executive Director to execute a three-year contract with two additional two-year options for airport wildlife hazard management support services. The estimated contract value over seven years equals \$3,500,000.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the new contract is to mitigate the threats of hazardous wildlife to safe aircraft operations. After two decades, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services (WS) notified the Port that they will no longer provide wildlife management services to support the Wildlife Hazard Management Plan (WHMP) which is required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for operations.

This new contract will allow us to consolidate wildlife management services contracts into a new single contract with an expanded scope and will provide more off-hour coverage. The increased services can be accommodated within the 2021 budget. A consolidated contract enables the program to reduce wildlife hazards, increase aviation safety and potentially lower airline costs due to delays and aircraft damage. The operating budget and 5-year Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with USDA Wildlife Services, other signatories and the Port to manage the surplus Canada goose population within the greater Seattle metropolitan area remains in place.

JUSTIFICATION

Wildlife Hazard Management (14 CFR § 139.337) and related FAA Advisory Circulars (AC) describe Airport Operator responsibilities with respect to managing hazardous wildlife out to 5 miles from

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the airport. SEA is required to maintain a current Wildlife Hazard Management Plan. The goal of the Plan is to minimize the risk to aviation safety, airport structures or equipment, or human health posed by populations of hazardous wildlife on and around the airport. The Plan accomplishes this through the identification of hazardous wildlife and their attractants, suitable proactive and reactive management techniques, necessary resources and supplies to successfully implement a wildlife hazard management program and personnel responsibilities and training requirements.

SEA intends to carry out its responsibility under the plan by contracting out the necessary support services. It is estimated that the contracted support hours will be between 80 – 120 hours per week. Additional hours will provide more weekend coverage. The new contract will give the Wildlife Program the ability to meet the intent of Federal and State regulatory mandates and support several of the Port-wide goals, as follows:

- *Operate Effective Aviation Gateways* - By maintaining continuity of operations when hazardous wildlife is kept away from the airfield, the number of strikes and flight delays are reduced. While total aircraft departures and arrivals have declined year-to-date, the bird strike rate has not. The Program's key performance metric of 20 strikes/100,000 aircraft operations is still being exceeded.
- *Enhance Safety* - By adhering to the Port's principle of keeping safety a high priority, the response to wildlife hazards, whenever they are detected, must include a contractor who can more effectively manage raptors, utilize the Port's Avian (bird) Radar, Foreign Object Debris (FOD) Detection system, and support the Port wildlife biologists with off-hour wildlife issues especially on weekends. The executed request will include assistance with firearm, pyrotechnic, and capture equipment training. Port Risk, Health and Safety, and Police have all stated that the three dozen or so Qualified Wildlife Personnel (QWP), comprised of the Airport Duty Managers (ADMs), Airport Operations Specialists (AOSs) and some Airport Operations Managers need training more than once per year.

Diversity in Contracting

Most of the qualified support providers are considered Women and Minority Business Enterprises (WMBE), whom can participate as a prime. Airport Operations has set a WMBE aspirational goal of 10% for this contract. Airport Operations is collaborating with CPO and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to create workforce development opportunities with the Prime along with the Port Wildlife Biologists.

DETAILS

For over two decades, most support services were provided by the USDA Wildlife Services. This is the first time the Airport is requesting that all wildlife support services be provided by a private entity. The private sector option is more desirable now because a private company contractor can provide all the needed support services and there were multiple well-qualified WMBE companies who responded to the July 2020 RFI. Additional resources are needed for the Program

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to address the backlog of wildlife-related work that cannot be accomplished adequately now, such as investigating aircraft-wildlife strikes to determine extent of aircraft damage and operational impacts. Added to the workload, is several species are increasing in abundance and need additional attention. Commission authorization will result in a contract for providing essential-worker functions related to wildlife management support services at the Airport. The initial term of the contract would be for three years and will give the Port the option to extend the contract for two additional two-year periods. The total life of the contract would have a length of up to seven years at an estimated cost of \$3,500,000, if all optional periods are exercised. In 2021, the remaining wildlife support contractor, Airport Raptor Management (ARM), will finish its 20 hour per week contract and assist the prime contractor (this request) as they take over those portions of the raptor (birds of prey) relocation program around 2022. The new contract is expected to provide 80 hours per week of support services, with options for an additional 40 hours a week.

Scope of Work

Mandatory responsibilities of the wildlife support contractor include providing oversight, direction, and control of its staff for continuous monitoring and assistance with responding to safety concerns as is outlined in the various Port Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) and as is required in *14 CFR § 139.337 Wildlife hazard management: (a) In accordance with its Airport Certification Manual...each certificate holder must take immediate action to alleviate wildlife hazards whenever they are detected.*

The existing skilled Wildlife Biologists on Port staff are involved with trapping, animal handling and care, accurate wildlife identification, and, in rarer instances, humanely euthanizing hazardous/nuisance wildlife that pose a significant risk to human health and aviation safety. More focus is still needed on those tasks as well as performing the expanded scope which includes:

- Providing additional weekend coverage to respond to urgent situations regarding wildlife hazards, injured wildlife, escaped domestic animals and atypical animal situation requiring the use of specialized capture equipment and skills.
- Assisting Port Biologists with training Airport Operation's personnel with more frequent firearm and pyrotechnic safety training and the maintenance of specialized capture equipment.
- Investigating aircraft-wildlife strike events to obtain information on aircraft damage and strike impacts to airlines for the weekly airfield safety report.
- More fully utilize the Avian (bird) Detecting Radar and FOD Detection systems and assistance with responding the real-time alerts to hazards that are identified by these advanced technologies.
- Database management and trending for planning and the development of best management practices

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Schedule

Activity

Commission Authorization (this action)	2020, Quarter 4
Contract Advertisement	2021, Quarter 1
Contract Award	2021, Quarter 2
Contract Start	2021, Quarter 2

Cost Breakdown

2021-23	2024-25	2026-27	TOTAL PROJECT
\$1,415,000	\$1,015,000	\$1,070,000	\$3,500,000

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

Alternative 1 (Status Quo) – The USDA WS contract expires on December 31, 2020. Support from a private contractor is needed.

Cost Implications: Results of the RFI suggest that the cost of private firm are comparable to the USDA Wildlife Services for similar staffing levels, however annual costs are still expected to be higher due to private sector insurance requirements and the expanded scope of work.

Pros:

- (1) None.

Cons:

- (1) If status quo was possible, the Airport would eventually become out of compliance with the FAA approved Wildlife Hazard Management Plan (WHMP) and its Airport Operating Certificate (ACM) given the scope of the USDA contract cannot be expanded to meet Port needs.

This is NOT the recommended alternative.

Alternative 2 – Utilize the Portability Program in addition to Veteran Fellowships, internal and external internships, graduate students and volunteers to satisfy Program needs.

Cost Implications: Financially favorable.

Pros:

- (1) The Wildlife Program will explore additional assistance through the Portability Program to address the backlog of work that still needs to be accomplished regardless of this request.

Cons:

- (1) A short-term solution cannot be tailored to address long-term needs or the diverse body of work that is required from skilled individuals (this request).

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- (2) The above-mentioned employment options are not designed to hire multiple people with a unique skill set.

This is NOT the recommended alternative.

Alternative 3 – Hire a single contractor to provide 80 hours per week with an additional 40 hours being an option, if finances allow for additional wildlife support services.

Cost Implications: \$406,800 is included in the 2021 operating budget. The last four optional years of the contract are negotiable.

Pros:

- (1) All support tasks will be the responsibilities of a single contractor. One contractor will provide clarity of expectations and result in a crossed-trained group of personnel that can support the Wildlife Program when a worker is absent.
- (2) Given wildlife related responsibilities are 24/7/365 additional personnel give the two Port Wildlife Biologist the ability to create an on-call schedule for responders to include off hours and weekends.

Cons:

- (1) This Alternative delays the need for Airport Operations to bring on additional FTEs to support Airport Operation’s full-implementation of the WHMP.
- (2) Contractors are ephemeral compared to FTEs which offer more operational continuity for research investigations that are the basis for knowing how best to adapt management approaches to emerging animal issues at the Airport.
- (3) A contract with a 7-year potential provides less program continuity than one that can be extended even longer.

This is the recommended alternative.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Annual Budget Status and Source of Funds

The annual expenses would be included in each fiscal year’s operating budget. The operating expense of \$406,800 was included in the 2021 operating budget. The expenses would be recovered through the airlines rates and charges. The funding source is the airport development fund.

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST

None

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PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

- 1) December 11, 2018 – Minutes of Commission Meeting
 - a. Item 6c. - Authorization for the Executive Director to reauthorize and execute two 5-year agreements between the United States Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services and the Port of Seattle for managing human-wildlife conflicts on or near Port property for the period January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2023, in the amount of \$1,560,000 for a Cooperative Service Agreement and \$15,000 for an Interlocal Agreement to control Waterfowl (Canada goose) in the greater Seattle area for a total of \$1,575,000.