



**COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

Item No. 10c

ACTION ITEM

Date of Meeting May 11, 2021

DATE : April 28, 2021

TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM: Lance Lyttle, Aviation Managing Director
Julie Collins, Aviation Director, Customer Experience & Brand Strategy

SUBJECT: SEA Customer Experience Quality Assurance Program

Amount of this request: \$1,360,000.

ACTION REQUESTED

Request Commission authorization for the Executive Director to execute a contract to establish a new airport-wide quality assurance program that will provide anonymous and periodic measurement, reporting and action-planning to enhance employee engagement with customers. The contract term is five years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SEA Customer Experience Quality Assurance program will engage a consultant that specializes in measuring and reinforcing employee engagement service standards and brand compliance to raise the bar to a world-class SEA customer experience. The Confidential Customer is a program component that utilizes professional evaluators anonymously posing as customers to utilize various airport services and report on every aspect of their experience. Confidential Customer representatives will follow detailed, scripted, typical scenarios and record their observations and experience. Confidential Customer feedback will provide SEA leaders and airport tenants with valuable insights that will lead to actions to improve customer satisfaction, reward positive behavior, and to identify training opportunities.

To support a deep and lasting service excellence cultural airport-wide, a 5-year commitment is proposed at an estimated value of \$1,360,000.

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| 2021 | \$140,000. |
| 2022 | \$300,000. |
| 2023 | \$300,000. |
| 2024 | \$300,000. |
| 2025 | \$320,000. |
| Total | \$1,360,000 |

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JUSTIFICATION

In January 2020, the Aviation division launched a new brand for SEA with our promise “to create, through a passionate service culture, an elevated travel experience that is inspired by the original nature of the Pacific Northwest. Last year, the Aviation division published a new customer service standards manual. Quality standards in this manual help to create, measure and sustain a service culture by establishing a clear and comprehensive set of priorities that detail high expectations to help the airport achieve them. This standards manual was developed for the benefit of all airport customers and outlines the customer service expectations for all SEA employees, regardless of employer, as well as volunteers. This SEA Customer Experience Quality Assurance program is intended to help uphold that promise.

The SEA Customer Experience Quality Assurance program adds another layer of quality assurance, utilizing the SEA Customer Service Standards Manual, to help evaluate employee customer engagement performance. This program will be joined with existing SEA performance measurement methods that include world airport rating system Skytrax, Airports Council International (ACI) – Airport Service Quality (ASQ) customer surveys, as well as daily inspections by terminal operations and custodial services. It is a common industry practice among the nation’s large hub airports to maintain quality assurance programs like this one.

Diversity in Contracting

Port staff is partnering with Diversity in Contracting to determine the aspirational women and minority business enterprise (WMBE) goal and conduct outreach as necessary in support of the program.

DETAILS

The SEA Customer Experience Quality Assurance Program will utilize Confidential Customer representatives who will monitor and measure service excellence by SEA employees at important touchpoints in the SEA customer journey.

Scope of Work

This new airport-wide quality assurance program will consist of five components: Program planning/development, confidential customer fieldwork logistics, data collection, reporting, and action planning. The Confidential Customer fieldwork will be launched in two phases.

Schedule

We estimate the contract to be executed in the fourth quarter, this year (2021). The program will be launched in two phases. Exact phasing may vary according to Aviation needs and priorities.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase I will measure frontline employee engagement at the departure curbside, ticketing, wheelchair services, custodial services, checkpoint queues, checkpoint screening, and with airport customer service representatives (Pathfinders). | <p>2021 Quarter 4</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phase II will expand to include airport dining, retail, and services, and landside customer engagements linked with the parking garage and the rental car shuttles. | <p>2022</p> |

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

Alternative 1 – Status quo, do not implement a quality assurance program to measure employee engagement

Cost Implications: \$0 further cost

Pros:

- (1) Budget could be re-allocated

Cons:

- (1) Provides no method for SEA to measure customer engagement across the airport
- (2) Does not support the Aviation division’s strategic goal to increase customer satisfaction.

This is not the recommended alternative.

Alternative 2 – launch program at once to avoid phasing

Cost Implications: \$300,000.

Pros:

- (1) A comprehensive, airport-wide quality assurance program would be in place sooner.

Cons:

- (1) This timing is not supported by Aviation Commercial Management and airport tenants.
- (2) Funds are not currently available in the Aviation 2021 operating budget to launch both phases.

This is not the recommended alternative.

Alternative 3 – Develop and launch the program in two phases, during 2021 through 2022.

Cost Implications: \$1,360,000.

Pros:

- (1) The timing to launch the Phase II in fourth quarter 2022, works best for the airport dining and retail tenants.
- (2) The incremental, two-phased approach to program planning and the launch, enables the best practices that are achieved in the first phase to be applied to phase II.

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Cons:

- (1) Implementing the airport-wide quality assurance program will take longer, over two years, vs. one year's time.

This is the recommended alternative.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Annual Budget Status and Source of Funds

The approved 2021 Aviation Customer Service operating budget includes \$140,000 for program planning and a phased program launch. The estimated cost for this contract over five years is \$1,360,000. The funding source will be the Airport Development Fund

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST

- (1) Presentation slides

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

None