

ORDER NO. 2021-09
AN ORDER OF THE PORT OF SEATTLE COMMISSION

To support the delivery of a plan to inventory the ecological, land use (including zoning), and recreational site conditions of the 55 (fifty-five) acres of Port-owned land within North SeaTac Park within 30 (thirty) days of this order.

PROPOSED
SEPTEMBER 14, 2021

INTRODUCTION

The Port of Seattle and the city of SeaTac ('SeaTac') have a long history of collaboration on North SeaTac Park. The Port began acquiring the property for noise and safety mitigation starting in 1970. The idea of a park was originally proposed by the Greater Highline Parks Board in 1976. The initial lease with SeaTac for the 195 acres of recreational land was signed in 1994 and, with an agreed-upon extension, will expire in 2070. Since then, the park has become a significant asset and an important airport operational buffer to the surrounding community. Based on amendments to the original lease with SeaTac, 55.58 acres is designated for redevelopment; of those, approximately 44 acres are leased to SeaTac under a 180-day lease revocation clause.

The Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) also intends to participate in the review of North SeaTac park. The JAC is comprised of three SeaTac council members and two Port commissioners that meet regularly, and exchange information related to the 2018 Interlocal Agreement (ILA) between the City of SeaTac and the Port of Seattle, as designated in the ILA. The JAC met in August 2021 and discussed a review of background materials surrounding North SeaTac Park including jurisdiction, leases, and other matters.

As part of the Sustainable Airport Master Plan (SAMP) planning process, an approximate 11-acre portion at the south end of North SeaTac Park was identified for Project L06 (a surface employee parking lot). This portion of North SeaTac Park is largely forested with heavy concentrations of invasive plant species and a system of trails used by bicyclists, runners, and walkers. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) recently stated that "...L06 has been removed from the (Port of Seattle's Sustainable Airport Master Plan)," which means this portion of North SeaTac Park is no longer in consideration to become a parking lot. This order requires an inventory of the 55.85 acres of North SeaTac Park habitat and community uses, as well of a review of other background history and related documents. The order requires that no planned actions be taken regarding the future disposition of the park and leased properties until the inventory has been completed.

TEXT OF THE ORDER

The Port of Seattle Commission supports the delivery of a plan by the Executive Director to inventory the attributes of the 55.58-acre parcel within the North SeaTac Park lease, including

environmental (trees, wildlife, habitat), community, and recreational attributes of the 55.58 acres of North SeaTac Park.

The inventory plan should be coordinated in partnership with the city of SeaTac and the Joint Advisory Committee and should reference recent materials developed by the Port and the City, and their contractors, related to uses within the park.

The Port of Seattle Commission also supports the recommendations of the Joint Advisory Committee to restart the “Working Group,” comprised of staff from the city of SeaTac and the Port and to review and confirm the background and jurisdictional materials related to North SeaTac Park.

The Executive Director shall report to the Commission within 30 days with a plan that includes a work program, a timeline, and a cost estimate to complete the inventory and review of background materials, along with partnership terms with SeaTac. No actions shall be taken by the Port in regard to lot L06 until such plan is delivered.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE ORDER

Port of Seattle Commissioners are aware that community members’ use North SeaTac Park for biking, running, leisure, and walking. The community also participates in land stewardship efforts by removing invasive plant species and maintaining the landscaping. Community leaders want to further steward the area and groom it for outdoor recreation purposes and as a healthy forest.

Through the Airport Communities Ecology (ACE) Fund, the Port has a precedent of working with airport-communities, nonprofit organizations, and researchers to produce assessments of tree-canopies and forest health conditions in parks and natural areas, as well as to develop plans to restore forests and increase tree canopy. In a similar way, the inventory of resources and uses of North SeaTac Park will help the Port, SeaTac, and local community members gain a better sense of the lay-of-the-land and inform future management decisions.

Producing an inventory of resources and uses within this portion of North SeaTac Park will also help guide the Port in meeting its goals and objectives found in the Century Agenda:

Goal 4: Be the greenest and most energy-efficient port in North America

- Objective 11: Reduce air pollutants and carbon emissions

Goal 6: Be a Highly Effective Public Agency

- Objective 17: Foster an environment of transparency, accountability, respect, leadership, and fairness to give Port staff the tools to be exceptional public servants
- Objective 18: Partner and engage with external stakeholders to build healthy, safe, and equitable communities