

**From:** [Megan Kogut](#)  
**To:** [Commission-Public-Records](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] North Seatac Park and the Port of Seattle Real Estate Strategic Plan  
**Date:** Thursday, March 3, 2022 10:55:10 AM

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Hello Port of Seattle Commissioners,

I am writing to express my hope that the Port of Seattle Real Estate Strategic Plan does not supercede environmental justice and climate change concerns regarding North Seatac Park.

For years, I used to race my mountain bike weekly at North Seatac Park and South Seatac Park, so I'm very familiar with both parks (in some places extremely familiar - I could point out to you all the places where I crashed.) Both parks serve the purpose of outdoor recreation well, and they provide some wildlife habitat, and slow climate change. They are key to their local communities - I came from north Seattle to race, but I could see locals walking and playing in the park. I have a PhD in environmental chemistry, including experience in climate change and botany, so I know the value of even an average forested area to our future. Even though this park may be small, almost all parks within cities are in danger of development, so every park counts.

In addition, because the airport has had, due to its noise and activity, such an impact on its neighbors already, and as a result the surrounding neighborhood is largely low income, the Port has an additional duty to consider environmental justice. The North and South Seatac Parks were created decades ago to help mitigate the growing incremental impact of the airport and supporting industry. They were supposed to mitigate past harms. At some point, the Port of Seattle needs to decide when enough is enough in terms of chipping away at those parks and undeveloped spaces. Is it now? If not, when is it?

And in addition, the Port needs to consider impacts on climate change: both the added activities, and the loss of flora on the land that would be developed.

I'm not familiar enough with the Port's plans to provide specific guidance. But I've been involved closely in politics in my own cities to know that municipal staff tend to build empires. The personal career incentives, and in many cases outdated priorities coded into documents and corporate culture, are strong forces. They do not necessarily reflect the priorities of voters.

I know that the Port of Seattle has the objective to create jobs and grow itself. But not all jobs and growth are created equal. And jobs and growth that require the creation of new infrastructure that impacts local neighborhoods are maybe not jobs that need to be created right now. I do not believe in jobs for jobs' sake, which is the argument put out for preserving coal mining and oil extraction. There has to be a consideration of other local and global priorities.

When I vote for Port Commissioners, I vote purposely for more progressive candidates who are willing to balance staff priorities and organization momentum with more modern priorities, including environmental justice and climate change.

Please, on behalf of all of the Seattle area voters who want a sea change towards environmental justice and climate change, but may not know about this particular plan in Seatac because we're distracted by the pandemic, and bipartisan politics, and the war in Ukraine, and the terrible news on climate change: please, make progressive choices regarding all undeveloped land around the airport, and especially land currently used as parks. It's what the majority of Seattle area voters would want for the residents in Seatac, and for the future.

Megan Kogut PhD  
15806 10th Ave NE  
Shoreline WA 98155

**From:** [Jordan Van Voast](#)  
**To:** [Commission-Public-Records](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: Tuesday, March 8 public testimony Port Commissioner's meeting  
**Date:** Monday, March 7, 2022 7:32:31 AM  
**Attachments:** [public comment 3.8.22.docx](#)

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p.s. Please use this copy as my final statement, not the one just sent. Thank you

On Mon, Mar 7, 2022 at 6:31 AM Jordan Van Voast <[jordanvvvv@gmail.com](mailto:jordanvvvv@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Commission Clerk,

I am attaching a copy of my prepared statement for tomorrow's Commission meeting. If there are only a small number of people signed up for public comment, is it permissible if my comment runs a little over 2 minutes - perhaps 2 minutes and 30 seconds? I've never gone over the limit before. I always try to prepare thoughtful comments which contribute to the public dialogue.

thank you,

On Sat, Mar 5, 2022 at 8:57 AM Jordan Van Voast <[jordanvvvv@gmail.com](mailto:jordanvvvv@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Commission-Public-Records, Please register me to speak at the upcoming meeting. Topic - Port of Seattle's response to the Ukraine crisis. Note - I will make every effort to join the meeting by phone at 11:45am, though I may not be able to join until noon. I will submit written testimony as well closer to Tuesday.

thank you,

Jordan Van Voast

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Every single act of kindness makes all the difference in the world.

Jordan Van Voast, Licensed Acupuncturist  
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CommuniChi Acupuncture [website](#)  
CommuniChi [Facebook](#)  
[CommuniChi You Tube](#)

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Dharma Friendship Foundation (DFF) [Website](#)  
Facebook [DFF](#)

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<https://seattlecruisecontrol.org/>

Seattle Cruise Control [Facebook](#)

Seattle Cruise Control [YouTube](#)

Public comment. March 8, 2023.

Port of Seattle Commission meeting

Good afternoon Director Metruck, Commissioners and Port staff. My name is Jordan Van Voast. I commend the Port of Seattle for its statement in solidarity with Ukraine. In recent weeks, Western media has been called out for its pro-European bias that marginalizes suffering in places where Brown and Black people live.

Let's talk about bias. The Biden administration and Europe are now targeting mega yachts owned by billionaires for their connection to Putin but giving a pass to yachts owned by Western billionaires, some of which have an annual carbon footprint<sup>1</sup> several times that of a Boeing 747. Why not confiscate and ban all super-yachts due to their war on the planet?<sup>2</sup> As usual, it all comes down to money and privilege.

Which brings us to the 296 sailings<sup>3</sup> that the Port of Seattle plans for this year and the biased cruise business model. We are told – with little evidence – that these bring wonderful benefits to the local economy, though studies<sup>4</sup> have repeatedly shown that these benefits are usually overstated. The recently completed Lloret study<sup>5</sup> summarizing 40 years of peer-reviewed articles on the harms of cruise tourism had this to say:

**“Overall, we can conclude that cruise tourism is a maritime activity causing major impacts on the environment and human health and wellbeing, with most likely small and doubtful local economic benefits *when negative externalities are monitored and disclosed.*”**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ecowatch.com/carbon-footprint-billionaires-2650552617.html?fbclid=IwAR2I5RShrsR0xysdjupyNNjLIR\\_6lpd0Xv0VUkh4gDV\\_H6X0VdVjvHDaz-E](https://www.ecowatch.com/carbon-footprint-billionaires-2650552617.html?fbclid=IwAR2I5RShrsR0xysdjupyNNjLIR_6lpd0Xv0VUkh4gDV_H6X0VdVjvHDaz-E)

<sup>2</sup> The Port of Seattle promotes superyachts in their business model. See: <https://www.portseattle.org/maritime/superyachts>

<sup>3</sup> A nearly 50% increase over 2019 – the last pre-pandemic cruise season!

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.pressherald.com/2018/06/11/long-touted-economic-benefits-of-cruise-ships-far-overstated/>  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330139423\\_Overstating\\_Cruise\\_Passenger\\_Spending\\_Sources\\_of\\_Error\\_in\\_Cruise\\_Industry\\_Studies\\_of\\_Economic\\_Impact](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330139423_Overstating_Cruise_Passenger_Spending_Sources_of_Error_in_Cruise_Industry_Studies_of_Economic_Impact)  
[https://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttraCanada\\_2018\\_conference/8/](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttraCanada_2018_conference/8/)  
<https://thewalrus.ca/cruise-ships-often-represent-the-worst-of-capitalism/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0025326X21010134>

It is widely acknowledged that cruise is the most environmentally harmful<sup>6</sup> sector of the travel industry and as the IPCC has again recently stated, we are almost out of time to win the war against greenhouse gases piling up in our home planet's atmosphere. Plans need to be made for a just transition so that affected workers and businesses can adapt to a business model that doesn't destroy the ecosystem or adversely impact human lives. I'd like to acknowledge and thank Commissioner Hasegawa for recently stating that "cruise as a regional benefit is debatable". There needs to be a deeper discussion of cruise's costs as well as its benefits. We need to ramp up plans for a just transition, not celebrating record numbers of cruise passengers and a correspondingly huge increase in greenhouse gases. When will you make a true commitment to a sustainable planet and accept that there is no place for giant cruise ships in our future? Thank you.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.geekyexplorer.com/cruise-ship-pollution/>

**From:** [Noemie Maxwell](#)  
**To:** [Commission-Public-Records](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Request to deliver spoken comments and attachment with written supplement  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 8, 2022 8:39:18 AM  
**Attachments:** [Consensus DefendersofNorthSeaTacPark.pdf](#)  
[Maxwell Vassilakis Comments 3 8 22.pdf](#)

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Hello,

My name is Noemie Maxwell Vassilakis. I would like to deliver spoken comments at the Port of Seattle Commission meeting today on the topic of protecting North SeaTac Park and our community forest.

I'm also requesting that the attached written comments and document be provided to the Commissioners and entered into the public meeting record.

Many thanks!

Noemie Maxwell Vassilakis  
253-653-6028



Noemie Maxwell Vassilakis  
Resident of Burien, Washington  
noemie\_maxwell@yahoo.com

To: Port of Seattle Commission President Ryan Calkins  
Commissioners Samuel Cho, Fred Felleman,  
Toshiko Hasegawa , and Hamdi Mohamed

March 8, 2022

Re: Written supplement to comments at the March 8, 2022 meeting of the Port of  
Seattle Commission

Dear Commissioners,

Many thanks to all of you for standing against putting an airport parking lot over  
11 acres of trees and bicycle trails in North SeaTac Park last summer.

I'm writing today as a [Defender of North SeaTac Park](#) in support of keeping our  
park whole and protecting the forested land in our community around the park.  
I've attached a copy of the Community Forest Consensus that this group recently  
finalized and which has just started gaining signatures.

The Consensus calls for securing North SeaTac Park as a park in perpetuity, halting  
deforestation by the Port on lands it controls within two miles of SeaTac  
International Airport, and for a comprehensive plan to protect, restore, and  
expand the forest in our near-airport communities. You can sign, and share it  
from this page: [KCTreeEquity.org/consensus](https://KCTreeEquity.org/consensus)

I understand that completion of a Port-conducted inventory of a forested part of North SeaTac Park, filled with wetlands and tributaries of Miller Creek, where the Port proposes 31 acres of commercial development, is expected this month.

This inventory will help guide your decisions on whether this land should be developed. I am writing to express that, regardless of the inventory's findings, it would be a serious error to destroy trees on dozens of acres of land in our community where the health department [recommends](#) increasing trees and green space coverage in order to protect us from exposure to airport pollution that is shortening our lives and causing babies to be born prematurely and underweight. (1)

The fact that we're in the middle of a climate emergency - and in a community with high levels of environmental health disparities would make this substantial loss of our guardian trees even worse. So would the fact that this development would extend very close to the boundary of Tub Lake, which is a regional treasure that enjoys special protections as a sphagnum bog under the King County Surface Water Manual.

Developing inside this park, which was established to compensate area residents for cumulative airport impacts, (2) would be a special kind of betrayal by the Port of Seattle of the people in this community.

The Port should honor its [commitment](#) to be "accountable for equitable policies" that ensure racial, social, and environmental, justice. (3) It should honor the commitment it made as a signatory to the King County Cities Climate Collaboration letter of commitment to protect forests and reduce sprawl. (4)

You as Commissioners can require that Port's real estate and development staff upgrade their policies and culture so that your agency is equipped to properly value our life-saving trees and green space as critical – and endangered – infrastructure. It is especially critical to protect, restore, and expand this infrastructure as our population grows and climate impacts worsen.



Trees keep deadly airport pollution out of our lungs. They stabilize our climate. They clean and cool the air. They prevent flooding, reduce urban heat, filter stormwater, protect streams, stabilize slopes. Adequate tree canopy is associated with reduced crime (5), improved mental health (6), and stronger local economies. (7)

The Port of Seattle, which controls a substantial proportion of the forest and green space infrastructure near the airport in our community, must be equipped to accord proper value to it. A pause on your agency's planned deforestation within two miles of the airport, as the Consensus calls for, would allow time to update your practices so that they reflect current knowledge.

I believe that the Port's current plans in and around our park are sprawl, plain and simple. I wish to call your attention to a 2018 letter from Alaska Airlines to the Port (8) in which the author noted that near-term SAMP proposals pose "a substantial risk of overbuilding," when "less ambitious alternatives" would likely suffice – and urged the Port to conduct a more rigorous environmental assessment.

And we cannot simply wait for the federal environmental review process to play out. A recent study examining 19 airport expansion projects nationwide that found that, during the NEPA planning process, "the FAA and airport owners did not consistently detect environmental justice impacts, nor did they consistently confer importance to those impacts when high proportions of protected populations were detected." (9)

We ask you to stand against development within the park and to support our Community Forest Consensus. Please do not allow the destruction of a significant portion of our irreplaceable community forest.

Thank you for taking my comments and for your work on behalf of our community.

Sincerely,

Noemie Maxwell Vassilakis

## NOTES

1. **Community Health and Airport Operations Related Noise and Air Pollution: Report to the Legislature** by Seattle-King County Department of Health in Response to Washington State HOUSE BILL 1109, December 1, 2020  
[https://app.leg.wa.gov/ReportsToTheLegislature/Home/GetPDF?fileName=Community%20Health%20and%20Airport%20Operations%20Related%20Pollution%20Report\\_c7389ae6-f956-40ef-98a7-f85a4fab1c59.pdf](https://app.leg.wa.gov/ReportsToTheLegislature/Home/GetPDF?fileName=Community%20Health%20and%20Airport%20Operations%20Related%20Pollution%20Report_c7389ae6-f956-40ef-98a7-f85a4fab1c59.pdf)
2. **Federal Aviation Administration Compliance Reviews of Airport Noise Land Use & Financial Operations 2016 p. 11.**  
[https://www.faa.gov/airports/airport\\_compliance/compliance\\_reviews/](https://www.faa.gov/airports/airport_compliance/compliance_reviews/)
3. **Port of Seattle Equity Statement and Vision**  
[https://www.portseattle.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/OEDI\\_Folio\\_individualPages.pdf](https://www.portseattle.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/OEDI_Folio_individualPages.pdf)
4. The Port is a signatory to the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration **Joint Letter of Commitment: Climate Change Actions in King County**, which commits to reducing sprawl and protecting forests. <https://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/dnrp-directors-office/climate/joint-commitments-update-with-signatures-final.pdf>
5. **Vibrant Cities Lab: “Trees Improve Public Safety”**  
<https://www.vibrantcitieslab.com/public-safety/>
6. Wolf KL, Lam ST, McKeen JK, Richardson GRA, van den Bosch M, Bardekjian AC. **Urban Trees and Human Health: A Scoping Review.** International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. 2020; 17(12):4371.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17124371>
7. **Website: Green Cities Good Health**, University of Washington Urban Forestry Urban Greening Research: “Local Economies”  
[https://depts.washington.edu/hhwb/Thm\\_Economics.html](https://depts.washington.edu/hhwb/Thm_Economics.html)
8. **Letter from Shane Jones, Alaska Airlines to Steve Rybolt, Port of Seattle**, 9/27/2018, published in Sustainable Airport Master Plan Near Term Projects Scoping Report Final Attachment 4G. Transcription and link to official version:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KWZkRI9yS9Zc3jJUUWmnDDdvIBkMwqm/edit?usp=sharing&oid=108760430335353386846&rtpof=true&sd=true>
9. **Investigation of environmental justice analysis in airport planning practice from 2000 to 2010**, Amber Woodburn McNair, Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment, V 81, April 2020  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1361920919311149>



## Defenders of North SeaTac Park Community Forest Consensus

<https://KCTreeEquity.org>  
[info@KCTreeEquity.org](mailto:info@KCTreeEquity.org)

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**Calling for emergency action and long term solutions by our elected officials to defend the health of people in the North SeaTac Park community and within ten miles of SeaTac International Airport as well as the stability of our climate by protecting this community's guardian forests, waterways, parklands, and trees.**

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In order to defend the people in the community surrounding North SeaTac Park, and all who live within the ten-mile community surrounding this airport, from the negative health and climate impacts posed by near-term plans for extensive deforestation and green space destruction by the Port of Seattle, the current owner and assigned steward of North SeaTac Park,

We call for:

- I. Legally-binding securement of North SeaTac Park as a Park in Perpetuity with a permanent prohibition, within the park, to commercial development and tree removal. This may be accomplished by changes in zoning and law, by conservation easement, by transfer or sale of this park land to an appropriate governmental entity, or by a combination of these or other means.

The Port caused the removal by eminent domain of thousands of residents, along with their homes and schools, from the land that this park now occupies. The Port has acknowledged that the creation of the park was “the culmination of a long term and very open planning process to compensate the area’s residents for cumulative airport

impacts.” (1) This measure would honor that expressed intent of the Port.

- II. An immediate moratorium on tree removal and green space destruction on public lands by the Port of Seattle within 2 miles of SeaTac International Airport, with exceptions only for targeted measures to protect public safety or the health of the surrounding natural ecosystem, or to prevent substantial physical damage to existing private or public property, where these objectives cannot be reasonably achieved through other means.

This call for action responds to the recommendation of Public Health - Seattle & King County (PHS&KC) to increase green space and tree coverage, particularly coniferous trees, within ten miles of SeaTac International Airport in order to reduce human exposure to airport-generated pollutants known to cause disease and shorten lives. PHS&KC has found that, with severity increasing as proximity to the airport increases, lifespans in this area are between 1.7 and 5 years shorter than in the balance of the county; premature births, low birthweights, and childhood learning problems are more common; and rates of cancer and heart, respiratory, cardiovascular, and other diseases are significantly higher. (2)

Furthermore, this call is put forth to safeguard human health in a community where residents experience high levels of environmental health disparities as measured by the Washington State Department of Health. (3)

It holds the Port of Seattle and our greater community accountable to the principles of environmental justice under Presidential Executive Order 12898 as well as to US Department of Transportation Order 5610.2 which requires that activities that will have “a disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority populations or low-income populations” must be avoided or mitigated when practicable. (4, 5) As reported by PHS&KC, “the majority of people in King County identifying as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander live in communities within 10 miles of the airport”, “a greater proportion of people in these communities are immigrants, and a slightly higher

proportion are children,” and the percentage of people in near poverty or poverty increased the closer you are to the airport”, ranging from 37.2% - 24.4% within ten miles of the airport as compared with 16.1% in the balance of the county. These poverty rates are even higher for children. (2)

This moratorium must go into effect immediately in order to prevent the Port of Seattle from implementing its current near-term plans that would result in significant reduction of green space and tree coverage in this community, and must continue until the CARE Plan for the Greater North SeaTac Park Community, as outlined below, or a plan with comparable protections for our community’s health and our climate-stabilizing urban forest, is in place

- III. A plan for Comprehensive Action to Restore the Ecology of North SeaTac Park and Community (CARE Plan), by the Port of Seattle and other partnering jurisdictions, that is fully funded and professionally managed, in order to restore and maintain for future generations the natural areas within and surrounding North SeaTac Park, including forests and waterways, with emphasis on Tub Lake and its prehistoric peat bog, a type of wetland that is highly environmentally sensitive and increasingly rare in King County.

The plan must include control of invasive weeds and preparation for existing and expected climate impacts such as drought, high heat, and pests.

It must, in a manner and at a scale recommended by experts in urban forestry and public health, implement the recommendation made by PHS&KC to increase the number of coniferous trees near SeaTac Airport to reduce residents’ exposure to toxics from airport operations. (3)

It must protect and retain existing trees, as large-diameter trees can capture more toxic particulates, store “disproportionally massive amounts of carbon,” and “fulfill a variety of unique ecological roles such as increasing drought-tolerance, reducing flooding from intense precipitation events, altering fire behavior, redistributing soil water, and acting as focal centers of mycorrhizal communication and resource sharing networks.” (6)

It should set a goal of restoring urban tree canopy coverage in this community from its current low averages, for example, of 21% in SeaTac (25% not including the airport), 30% in Burien, and 29% in Des Moines, to 40% or more, as recommended by Forterra NW in three studies that it prepared for the Port of Seattle Airport Community Ecology Fund. (7-9)

And it must include concrete actions to limit, as reasonably possible, development activities of the Port of Seattle within ten miles of the airport to its existing developed footprint. The Port controls sprawling multi-acre, single-level parking lots as well as other already-paved and underutilized properties, where redevelopment with higher density approaches are possible, feasible, and ecologically sound.

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The lands and waterways within ten miles of SeaTac Airport and beyond are un-ceded territory of first nation Tribes, past and present, who have stewarded greenspaces here and in this region since time immemorial, and who continue this work today as co-managers of the natural resources of this area. We recognize and honor them and their connection with this land.

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**\* Citations and links to numbered sources 1-9 at <https://KCTreeEquity.org/cites>**