



COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM

Item No. 11a

BRIEFING ITEM

Date of Meeting March 22, 2022

DATE: February 25, 2022

TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM: Lance Lyttle, Managing Director, Aviation Division
Marco Milanese, Senior Community Engagement Manager, External Relations
Eric Schinfeld, Senior Federal and International Government Relations Manager,
External Relations

SUBJECT: SEA Stakeholder Advisory Round Table (StART) 2021 Annual Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Port of Seattle developed the SEA Stakeholder Advisory Round Table (StART) in 2018 to enhance cooperation between the Port and the Highline Forum-member cities of SeaTac, Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park, Tukwila and Federal Way. This voluntary, non-governing, regional roundtable is convened by the Aviation Managing Director and was developed in partnership with the leadership from the Highline Forum-member cities and other representational entities.

StART provides all parties with the opportunity to:

- Support meaningful and collaborative public dialogue and engagement on airport-related operations, planning and development;
- Provide an opportunity for the Highline Forum-member cities to inform the airport-related decision making of the Port of Seattle and other jurisdictions/organizations;
- Raise public knowledge about the airport and its impacts, and, of most significance
- Focus on practical solutions to reduce the impact of the airport on Highline Forum-member cities.

On January 26, 2021, StART, after months of negotiations, formally revised its Operating Procedures. Among the numerous changes, the revised Operating Procedures established a more formal relationship with the Highline Forum, created a Steering Committee that provides StART with shared strategic direction, offers the StART membership greater input on the facilitator and strengthened the behavior expectations for the entire membership.

StART's major accomplishments are primarily the result of efforts initiated by its two working groups: The Aviation Noise (AN) Working Group and the Federal Policy (FP) Working Group.

In 2021, the AN Working Group, with a mission to prioritize and explore potential near-term actions to reduce and prevent aviation noise, continued to focus its efforts on its Aviation Near-Term Noise Action Agenda. This included reviewing and refining work associated with several of the agenda's initiatives and exploring new potential initiatives to include within the agenda.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2022

The FP Working Group has a mission to change federal policies and regulations that can give the FAA, the Port and the communities more tools, resources and flexibilities to address aircraft noise and emissions concerns. It has developed and continues to implement a shared Port-Cities Federal Policy Priorities agenda. In 2021, the FP Working Group prioritized advocacy surrounding federal Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and the Build Back Better Act.

In 2022, expect the AN Working Group to continue to prioritize efforts that fit within its Aviation Near-Term Noise Action Agenda. For the FP Working Group, expect a continued focus on advocating for shared federal priorities, particularly through the Build Back Better Act, federal Fiscal Year 2023 appropriations and the 2023 FAA Reauthorization Act.

StART OVERVIEW

Cognizant of SEA's growth and the community impacts associated with that growth, the Port of Seattle is committed to building open relationships with the community and local jurisdictions that foster trust, accountability and collaboration. An important component of that commitment is the creation of StART in early 2018.

The Port of Seattle, in collaboration with the six Highline Forum member-cities and other representational entities, developed StART to enhance cooperation between the Port and the Highline Forum-member cities of SeaTac, Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park, Tukwila and Federal Way. This voluntary, non-governing, regional roundtable is convened by the Aviation Managing Director, Lance Lyttle, the Chair of StART.

StART enables a forum that fosters a spirit of good will, respect and openness while encouraging candid discussion between the Port and residential and business community members from the Highline Forum-member cities.

Each city designates three members to serve on StART who are joined by representatives from Alaska Airlines and Delta Air Lines, an air cargo representative and Port staff. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) provides agency expertise.

Meetings, in 2021, were facilitated by Brian Scott, BDS Planning & Urban Design.

StART created two working groups to empower StART's members to work on identified priorities between StART meetings: The Aviation Noise (AN) Working Group in late 2018 and the Federal Policy (FP) Working Group in early 2019.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2022

MEMBERSHIP & REVISED OPERATING PROCEDURES

Though interrupted by COVID, the Port and all six Highline Forum-member cities collaborated throughout 2020 to address ways to increase StART’s effectiveness and shared accountability. On January 26, 2021, an updated set of operating procedures, including a revised Code of Conduct, was confirmed by the Highline Forum-member cities and the Port. Some of the major changes to the Operating Procedures include:

- A more formal relationship between the Highline Forum and StART.
- A Steering Committee that provides support, guidance, and strategic direction for StART.
- Feedback annually on the facilitator’s management of StART meetings and members.
- Strengthened behavior expectations and clarified responsibilities for all with adhering to StART’s Code of Conduct.

By-mid-2021, all Highline Forum-member cities had appointed their two community representatives to serve on StART and StART again reached full representation.

AVIATION NOISE WORKING GROUP

In June 2019, StART formed its first working group: The AN Working Group comprised of a subset of StART members, Port staff and additional staff from the Highline Forum-member cities and other representational entities along with a noise consultant to provide expert advice. Its assignment: prioritize and explore potential near-term actions to reduce and prevent aviation noise.

Aviation Near-Term Noise Action Agenda

In 2021, the AN Working Group focused on reviewing and refining work associated with several of the agenda’s initiatives and exploring new potential initiatives to include within the agenda, including:

(1) **The Late Night Noise Limitation Program** – Voluntary measure to reduce late night noise by incentivizing air carriers to fly at less noise sensitive hours or transition to quieter aircraft. Program commenced in July 2019 with regular reporting each quarter to external audiences. In 2021, Port staff began to meet again directly with air carriers who had the most noise exceedances during the late night hours. In 2021, the program achieved its first significant success when EVA Airways, because of the program, made the switch to a quieter aircraft during the late night hours.

(2) **Runway Use Plan** – Informal Runway Use Plan, implemented in late 2019, to minimize use of the Third Runway during the late-night hours (12:00 AM to 5:00 AM). Late night operations on the Third Runway have dropped dramatically since implementation of the Runway Use Plan from an average of 12 nightly landings pre-implementation to an average of one nightly landing in 2021. Runway usage continues to be monitored with regular reporting at StART meetings.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2022

(3) **Glide Slope Adjustment** – Raise Runway 34R’s glideslope to lessen aircraft approach noise. The 34R glide slope adjustment is incorporated into an airport taxiway reconfiguration project. Preliminary design is now complete. Implementation is contingent on the Sustainable Airport Master Plan’s (SAMP) finalization and FAA approval. A three degree glideslope on Runway 34R seven miles south of SEA will equate to aircraft being roughly 184 feet higher than they fly currently.

(4) **Monthly Noise Comment Reporting** – Provide up-to-date, accessible information on noise complaints and comments submitted by the public. Online monthly reporting began with June 2020 and updates are provided at StART meetings on a regular basis.

(5) **Noise Abatement Departures Profiles Analysis** – Analyze the feasibility of implementing a “distant” departure profile to lessen aircraft departure noise for farther out airport communities. Though a “distant” departure profile could lessen noise, the analysis also identified a possible uptick in noise for close-in neighborhoods. Consequently, the AN Working Group agreed to not pursue any additional proactive measures to promote the distant procedure with air carriers.

(6) **Ground Noise Study** – Analyze airfield ground noise sources and identify potential mitigation measures. Airfield ground noise sources identified in the study include taxiing, takeoff rolls, reverse thrust upon arrival, auxiliary power unit (APU) use and engine maintenance run-ups. The study’s noise monitoring and modeling is complete and potential mitigation measures are being developed by the consultant team.

(7) **Rolling Takeoffs** – Establish rolling takeoffs as the preferred takeoff procedure during periods of light air traffic. A noise monitoring effort will soon be implemented to evaluate whether there is a measurable noise difference of instituting a rolling takeoff versus a traditional takeoff. Results to be shared with the AN Working Group.

In 2022, the AN Working Group will continue to identify and analyze sources of aviation noise and explore new action items that could be undertaken as part of its Aviation Near-Term Noise Action Agenda.

FEDERAL POLICY WORKING GROUP

The Port of Seattle is extremely limited in its authority to address some of the core issues that local residents have expressed about aviation: it has no authority to set flight paths or control when planes take off or land; it is required by federal law to accommodate all legitimate airline requests; it cannot determine what airplanes or engines are used by airlines; and airport revenue can only be used for noise insulation if the properties are within the FAA’s approved 65 DNL noise contour.

For those reasons, StART formed a FP Working Group – to identify areas of consensus and collaboration between the Port and airport cities on new tools, new authorities, new resources, new approaches and new engagement from the federal government, and to engage Members of Congress in pushing for these shared priorities.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2022

Over a year-long period, the Port and the airport cities successfully identified a significant number of shared federal policy priorities – both implementation of existing laws from the 2018 Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act as well as new policies and investments to pass into law. They are as follows:

FAA Reauthorization Provisions:

While all the FAA Reauthorization noise provisions are important, there are three top priorities – 1) the provisions related to evaluation of the 65 DNL noise standard (sections 173, 187 and 188), 2) the study of the impact of overflight noise on human health (section 189), and 3) the proposed environmental mitigation pilot program (section 190). The timely and effective execution of these provisions are well aligned with community concerns and have the potential for substantive benefit to the region.

- **Sections 173/187/188:** In terms of the 65 DNL, the FAA put out a brief report finding that the 65 DNL is the only viable metric, but the FP Working Group is interested in them taking a more comprehensive review of this topic. The FAA also recently released its comprehensive and detailed survey of noise annoyance levels, and the findings of this study will be a key driver of next steps related to noise mitigation best practices. The Federal Policy WG is urging policy guidance based on the release of the survey as soon as possible.
- **Section 189:** As one of the metropolitan areas called out in the legislation for focus of the human health study, the FP Working Group is particularly interested in the scope, methodology and findings of the study of health and economic impacts of overflight noise. In addition to urging swift action on this provision, the Federal Policy WG would like to be engaged with the FAA and the research university carrying out this work throughout the process.
- **Section 190:** The Puget Sound region is known for both its innovation and commitment to sustainability, and so the FP Working Group was very excited about the potential for a pilot program that would allow for experimenting with new approaches to reducing or mitigating aviation impacts on noise, air quality, or water quality. The FP WG certainly intends to apply for this funding, but also offer its willingness to provide input to the design and structure of the grant program. The Federal Policy WG also looks forward to working to ensure sufficient appropriations for this provision.

New Legislation:

There are also pieces of legislation that the FP Working Group believe would help move its priorities forward:

- **Representative Smith’s Protecting Airport Communities from Particle Emissions Act,** which would direct the FAA to report on ultrafine particles and their health impacts for communities around 10 of the busiest U.S. airports. The study would also analyze the potential impacts of mitigation options, emissions reductions, and the increased use of aviation biofuels.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2022

- **Representative Lynch’s Air Traffic Noise and Pollution Expert Consensus Act**, which would direct the FAA to enter into appropriate arrangements with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to provide for a report on the health impacts of air traffic noise and pollution.
- **Representative Smith’s legislation that would allow for secondary noise mitigation investments in previously insulated homes**, in specific situations where those noise reduction packages failed or were flawed in some way.
- **Representative Smith’s legislation that would provide EPA funding for research and mitigation efforts related to aircraft noise and emissions.**
- **The Sustainable Skies Act**, to incentivize the production and implementation of sustainable aviation fuels through a tax credit for sustainable aviation fuels blending

New Investments:

- **More funding for the existing FAA noise insulation program** – The FP Working Group supports increased set asides for airport improvement grants for airport emission reduction projects, airplane noise mitigation and other airport projects that reduce the adverse effects of airport operations on the environment and surrounding communities.
- **Funding for a "Healthy Ports Initiative"**, to provide federal funding for environmental justice programs in near-port communities. The House-passed Build Back Better Act included \$3.5 billion for a "Healthy Ports Initiative" to "support programs to mitigate the cumulative impacts of air pollution on neighborhoods near ports, often communities of color." The bipartisan \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act also included some funds for programs that address these issues - including funding to reduce drayage truck idling and to address indoor air quality in public schools.
- **More funding for research and deployment of sustainable aviation fuels as well as other low-zero carbon alternative fuels for ground transportation vehicles such as renewable natural gas and electrification** – The FP Working Group is focused on not only pursuing this goal through legislation and appropriations but also executive action, especially because sustainable aviation fuels not only decrease carbon emissions, but also decrease other air particle emissions.
- **More funding and incentives for aircraft modernization and other environmental performance improvements** – The FP Working Group is impressed and excited about the work that the European Union and the European aviation industry has done to tie together COVID recovery and environmental sustainability and will be doing more research on how those efforts can be applied in the United States.
- **More research and investment into the future of aircraft** – The FP Working Group supports federal investments and policies that drive cleaner aircraft, such as electric jets, while ensuring that these new planes don't increase noise impacts. Any new commercial jets – including supersonic aircraft – should meet or exceed existing noise standards.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2022

StART IN 2022

One of the key results from StART’s revised Operating Procedures, the StART Steering Committee began meeting in early 2021 with the goal of providing support, guidance, and strategic direction for StART. Membership on the Steering Committee includes the Chair of StART, city representatives, which typically are filled by the city managers, and airline representatives. The Steering Committee is resourced by the FAA, Port support staff, and the facilitator.

Six times a year, the Steering Committee meets to discuss agenda items for upcoming StART meetings and receive updates on efforts underway at the AN and FP Working Groups. The Steering Committee also reviews and adjusts a list of tentative priorities for upcoming StART meetings or for StART to act on. The list, as of February 2022, is:

Tentative priorities for 2022 StART meetings:

- Sustainable Airport Master Plan (SAMP)
- Aviation fuel dumping & airline/airport procedures
- South King County Fund update
- Air cargo operational changes & expected trends
- The latest on airport-related health studies
- Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission recommendations
- Paine Field overview
- Next-Gen procedures & implementation in Puget Sound
- Noise Comment Reporting & How it’s utilized
- Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act
- 2023 FAA Reauthorization Act priorities
- Airport’s impact on near-airport roads
- Insulation Program overview
- Impact of the Washington State Aircraft Noise Abatement Act

The StART AN Working Group and FP Working Group set their own workplans and meeting agendas. Both working groups are also receptive to tackling additional topics and priorities as they arise.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

The 2019 StART Annual Report to the Commission was cancelled in 2020 because of impacts related to COVID-19.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2022

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING

- (1) StART Operating Procedures
- (2) StART 2021 Membership Roster
- (3) Aviation Near-term Noise Action Agenda Summary
- (4) StART Federal Advocacy Priorities Matrix
- (5) 2021 StART Annual Report
- (6) Presentation slides

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

March 9, 2020 – The Commission was briefed on StART’s 2020 Annual Report

January 22, 2019 – The Commission was briefed on StART’s 2018 Annual Report