



**COMMISSION  
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

**Item No.** 11a

**BRIEFING ITEM**

**Date of Meeting** March 28, 2023

**DATE:** March 8, 2023

**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) 2022 Annual Report**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 2018, the Port of Seattle launched the SEA Stakeholder Advisory Round Table (StART) in partnership with the Highline Forum-member cities and other representational entities to enhance cooperation between the Port and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport's (SEA's) neighboring communities.

StART provides the Port of Seattle with a dedicated forum intended specifically for discussing and tackling airport and aviation industry impacts on the neighboring Highline Forum-member cities. With the Port, the FAA, the primary air carriers, and the airport's neighboring cities all represented around the table, StART brings together all the relevant parties with a common purpose to share information, collaborate and achieve results.

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

**StART OVERVIEW**

Cognizant of SEA's growth and the ramifications of that growth on neighboring residents, 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 was the creation of StART in early 2018.

The Port of Seattle 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 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:

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- 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, its impacts; and
- Most significantly, focus on practical solutions to reduce the impact of the airport and aviation operations on Highline Forum-member cities.

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

Meetings, in 2022, were facilitated by Brian Scott, BDS Planning & Urban Design with assistance from Dori Krupanics, 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.

In 2022, 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.

In 2022, the FP Working Group – with 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 – has developed and continues to implement a shared Port-Cities Federal Policy Priorities agenda. Last year, the FP Working Group prioritized advocacy surrounding the Inflation Reduction Act, the 2023 FAA Reauthorization Act and several agency rulemakings related to aircraft emissions standards.

### **AVIATION NOISE WORKING GROUP**

The AN Working Group is 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 is to prioritize and explore potential near-term actions to reduce and prevent aviation noise.

#### ***Aviation Near-term Noise Action Agenda – 2022 Highlights***

In 2022, 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.

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The highlights in 2022 include:

(1) **Ground Noise Study** – The study, which analyzed airfield ground noise sources and identified potential mitigation measures, was completed in the spring. Airfield ground noise sources identified in the study by the consultants included stop and go aircraft queuing, traditional takeoffs, reverse thrust, auxiliary power unit (APU) use, engine maintenance run-ups and dual engine taxiing. The AN Working Group, since the study's completion, has been reviewing each of the potential mitigation measures to determine feasibility and if there's agreement, the steps to implementation.

(2) **Discouraging Reverse Thrust** – Identified as a noise source in the Ground Noise Study, reverse thrust is used by pilots to deaccelerate aircraft upon landing. In coordination with the FAA, Alaska Airlines, Delta Airlines and the members of the AN Working Group, updated language was developed that discourages the use of reverse thrust at SEA at all times of the day and beyond what is necessary. The updated, voluntary SEA language was implemented in January 2023 and will be followed by an air carrier awareness campaign in mid-2023.

(3) **Encouraging Rolling Takeoffs** – Identified as a noise source in the Ground Noise Study, rolling takeoffs have less of a noise footprint than traditional takeoffs that require aircraft to power up after coming to a complete stop. Noise monitoring conducted by Port staff over the summer to evaluate rolling takeoffs didn't produce usable data. However, based upon past results at a comparable airport, implementation of voluntary SEA language identifying rolling takeoffs as having a noise benefit was pursued. In coordination with the FAA, Alaska Airlines, Delta Airlines and the members of the AN Working Group, new, voluntary SEA language promoting rolling takeoffs is in development. If enacted, the language will be followed by an air carrier awareness campaign in 2023.

### ***Aviation Near-term Noise Action Agenda – Earlier Achievements***

(1) **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 StART, air carriers and other external audiences.

(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.

(3) **Glide Slope Adjustment** – Raise Runway 34R's glideslope to lessen aircraft approach noise. Implementation is contingent on the Sustainable Airport Master Plan's (SAMP) finalization and FAA approval.

(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.

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**FEDERAL POLICY WORKING GROUP**

Because the Port of Seattle is extremely limited in its authority to address some of the core issues that local residents have expressed about aviation, StART formed a FP Working Group as a way to identify areas of consensus and collaboration between the Port and the Highline Forum-member 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.

Over a year-long period, the Port and the airport cities successfully identified a significant number of shared federal policy priorities for proposed inclusion in the 2023 FAA Reauthorization Act. They are as follows:

- 1) Reducing the impact of overflight noise on near-airport communities by:
  - a. Advocating for US Representative Smith’s legislation to allow for homes located within the airport’s current FAA-recognized noise contours that meet broader criteria for “failed” insulation to be eligible for secondary investments – particularly those homes where the warranty has expired, or the product manufacturer is out-of-business and therefore unavailable to honor warranties.
  - b. Advocating for US Representative Smith’s Aviation Noise and Emissions Mitigation Act, which would empower the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to play a productive role in addressing community concerns about aircraft noise and emissions. This legislation would support the collection of data and then fund initiatives to mitigate aircraft noise and emissions. These new tools could make a significant difference, particularly in terms of environmental justice.
  - c. Instituting a deadline for action on the FAA Neighborhood Environmental Survey (NES). Without a clear timeline and deadline for whether and how FAA may act on the results of the NES, airports and communities are stuck in a frustrating limbo of uncertainty. The FP Working Group also believes that FAA could use a wider range of input on this challenging and complicated topic.
- 2) Reducing aircraft emissions through:
  - a. Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) incentives and investments including those contained in the Inflation Reduction Act. The FP Working Group urges the 2023 FAA Reauthorization to direct the FAA to do everything possible to successfully implement these policies in ways that move the United States toward the Biden-Harris’ Administration’s SAF Grand Challenge goal of producing at least three billion gallons per year of SAF by 2030. Similarly, the FP Working Group supports additional, complementary programs, policies, and investments that the FAA can undertake to facilitate progress – including but not limited to collaboration with other federal agencies such as the US Departments of Energy, Agriculture and Defense.
  - b. Continuing the Environmental Mitigation Pilot Program contained in Section 190 of the 2018 FAA Reauthorization. The FP Working Group supports the permanent

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authorization of this program at six million dollars per year, because of its potential to support innovative technology solutions to reduce aircraft noise and emissions issues.

- c. Advocating for US Representative Smith’s Protecting Airport Communities from Particle Emissions Act which would bring more federal attention and engagement on the sources, characteristics, dispersion, and potential health effects of ultrafine particulates from aircraft engines.
- 3) Addressing regional airport capacity needs by ensuring FAA support for new regional airport capacity. In particular, the FP Working Group would like to see policy language in the FAA Reauthorization legislation that accomplishes three goals: 1) clarifies the process for FAA regulatory review and agency collaboration with cities and states in high air travel demand regions looking to invest in new airport capacity; 2) dedicates funding for new airport capacity in high demand regions; and 3) provides additional FAA guidance on necessary steps to implement any final decisions from the Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission.

In 2023, 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 the inclusion of shared federal priorities in the 2023 FAA Reauthorization Act – including via a Port-Cities DC Fly-in at the end of April.

**ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING**

- (1) Aviation Near-term Noise Action Agenda Summary
- (2) Port-Cities 2023 FAA Reauthorization Letter
- (3) StART Membership Roster 2022
- (4) 2022 StART Annual Report
- (5) Presentation slides

**PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS**

- March 22, 2022 – The Commission was briefed on StART’s 2021 Annual Report  
March 9, 2020 – The Commission was briefed on StART’s 2019 Annual Report  
January 22, 2019 – The Commission was briefed on StART’s 2018 Annual Report