

## April 22, 2020 Recap

The SEA Stakeholder Advisory Round Table (StART) meeting took place on April 22, 2020, through video conference, with a focus on gaining perspective on and discussing the impacts of COVID-19 on aviation as well as the challenges facing the airport area cities. This voluntary, advisory roundtable, convened by the Airport Managing Director, Lance Lyttle, is a venue for the Port of Seattle to engage with the communities of SeaTac, Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park, Tukwila and Federal Way. Representatives from Delta Air Lines and Alaska Airlines are also members. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) participates as a non-member. The cities of Burien, Des Moines, and Federal Way have temporarily suspended their involvement in StART.

The Airport Managing Director, Lance Lyttle, welcomed the new community representative from Tukwila and the new cargo representative. Lyttle provided an overview of the impacts of COVID-19 on the airport. He stated that the airport has been hit very hard and provided a number of details including:

- The number of travelers coming through the airport is down around 90-95% from 2018's projections.
- In 2018 there was 50,000 people a day moving through the airport and currently there is approximately 2,500 a day.
- Airlines have canceled hundreds of flights.
- 62 airport dining and retail locations are closed.
- Many airport workers have been laid off.

Lyttle emphasized that health and safety is the number one priority. The airport has made many changes to comply with social distancing including having all staff who can work from home, do so; all essential workers have been provided with masks; there is increased and continuous cleaning and sanitation; hand sanitizer stations have been installed throughout the airport with an App available to locate them; and all meetings are being held virtually.

Lyttle briefly discussed the Port's approaches to COVID-19 stating that the Port is considering ways to weather the economic impacts and spur economic development. The Port continues to establish relief and response efforts for the airport's tenants and business partners. SEA was awarded \$195 million dollars in federal grants as part of a \$10 billion-dollar relief package to airports across the US. The funding provides the ability to continue airport operations and fund 90 percent of staff capacity. The Port is currently reviewing capital projects to determine which projects can proceed and which have to be delayed.

City representatives discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on their communities. Carl Cole, SeaTac City Manager, reported that the biggest issue for SeaTac is the business downturn. He stated that the City relies heavily on sales and use tax revenue, primarily parking taxes and the tax revenue from businesses that serve/exist because of the airport. The City is modeling different potential scenarios, but the current level of uncertainty makes it difficult to project what recovery may look like. SeaTac is augmenting many of their services to serve immediate community needs given the high level of unemployment. Mark Hoppen, City of Normandy Park City Manager, shared that the City does not have many businesses that

pay sales and use tax. Most City employees are working from home, although there have been a few layoffs/furloughs. Brandon Miles, Tukwila Business Relations Manager, reported that the City is heavily reliant on sales and use tax revenue and that they are projecting significant cuts to City revenue which will translate into budget cuts. The focus now is mostly on meeting the community's basic needs including feeding students and seniors. Most city employees are also working from home. The city representatives reported that cities are communicating with each other and coordinating through the Sound Cities Association.

Scott Ingham from Delta Air Lines and Randy Fiertz from Alaska Airlines discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on air carriers. Fiertz stated that Alaska flight schedules are down 70-80% and that it is anticipated that demand will not begin to increase for at least a few months. He shared that funds received from the federal government has many strings attached, but that the money will be used to cover about 70% of employee salaries and benefits. Ingham echoed Fiertz's statements of appreciation to Lyttle and his staff for handling the challenges of operating the airport in the midst of a pandemic. He stated that Delta operations are down by 80%. He reviewed the new and stringent cleaning and boarding procedures. Delta is offering free flights to medical professionals and utilizing the fleet, where possible for cargo flights.

David Suomi, FAA Northwest Mountain Regional Administrator, provided information related to the impacts of COVID-19 from the FAA's perspective. He shared that only about 20-25 of 1,450 FAA employees are working on location at the regional office. Social distancing is being implemented at air traffic control centers and other facilities. Operating hours will be adjusted at 100 control centers nationwide, but currently not at SEA. Suomi shared that air travel is down around 95%, tens of thousands of aircraft are grounded.

Vince Mestre, consultant to the StART Aviation Noise Working Group, discussed COVID-19 impacts related to airline fleet mix changes and how it may affect aviation noise. He noted that in the near term, with a reduction in passenger jet operations, there is a significant reduction in the movement of aircraft belly cargo. This is putting pressure on cargo freight operators which has resulted in some additional cargo freight flights being flown. He stated that there are some positive noise-related developments since these new cargo flights are not being flown by Boeing 747s. There are attempts to utilize some passenger jets for cargo with some potential modifications in the passenger seating area. In general, he reported that it is likely that as airlines increase flights, they will utilize the most fuel efficient and quietest aircraft in their fleets and that this would likely accelerate the retirement of the noisier, older aircraft.

Lyttle concluded the meeting and asked for input on how best the airport can partner with the cities to face the challenges ahead.

Public comment was heard. The next meeting is scheduled for June 24, 2020 at 6 pm, either at the Conference Center at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport or by video conference. The public is invited to attend.

All April 22, 2020 StART meeting documents can be found on the Port of Seattle [website](#).