



September 3, 2008

Frequently Asked Questions

What does your group want?

We want to see passenger air service offered at Paine Field. It's a modern airport, owned by the taxpayers of Snohomish County, which is fully capable of supporting a few passenger flights among the 400 flight operations a day now. Passenger service will complement the current uses at Paine Field, including Boeing, and will create jobs and support existing local businesses. We want the county to be an enthusiastic partner with airlines interesting in serving our airport.

Travel between Snohomish County and Sea-Tac is going to get more challenging in the future as the population grows and as major construction projects get underway – the light rail line, the SR 520 bridge rebuild, the Viaduct replacement – all of those and other projects will further challenge traffic for many years into the future.

Who supports passenger air service?

We are getting calls from people from throughout Snohomish County – south, north, east, and from Everett. Our numbers are growing daily. It's a pretty exciting thought for anyone who has to fly very much – imagine being 15 or 20 minutes from the airport, avoiding all the traffic between here and Sea-Tac and all of the hassle at Sea-Tac.

Who is against passenger air service?

There are some people who are legitimately concerned about the negative impacts of passenger air service at Paine Field. They're concerned that Paine Field could become another Sea-Tac – lot of noise, traffic, motels – that sort of thing. We look forward to engaging in a discussion of those issues.

What about the environmental impacts of commercial service at Paine Field?

Paine Field is already a busy airport with 400 some operations a day now. A few passenger flights could be added into the mix without increasing the impact.

Citizens Right to Fly From Paine Field Committee
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The real environmental impact will be beneficial – reducing travel between Snohomish County and Sea-Tac. We will reduce traffic, reduce carbon emissions, and reduce our use of gasoline.

Are you doing this on behalf of Allegiant Air which has asked to use Paine Field?

Our aim is to bring passenger air service to Paine Field – we think it will be good for the economy and will provide convenience for citizens here. That's our goal. Allegiant Air is the only carrier currently expressing interest in operating at Paine Field – and we welcome them.

Why can't Allegiant and other new airlines be accommodated at Sea-Tac?

Airlines – like all businesses – operate under different models. Allegiant is a low-fare carrier that strives to reduce its operating costs in a multitude of ways including serving lower cost airports like Paine Field. They're looking for market niches – areas that are underserved. Allegiant doesn't want or need the services – or the expenses – that go along with operating at Sea-Tac.

How many passenger flights a day do you expect?

Paine Field is never going to be a big, busy passenger airport. Sea-Tac is too close and most airlines need the services and the connected flights that are offered there.

Market studies suggest there is demand for about five departures a day at Paine Field. We think that eventually could grow to 15 or 20 departures a day. That's a minimal increase in flights when you consider that Paine Field has approximately 400 operations a day now.

How can you assure Paine Field won't become another Sea-Tac?

Paine Field does not have the air space capacity or the land available to support a major passenger/commercial airport. The present users of Paine Field, including Boeing and the companies that support it, are extremely important to the economy of Snohomish County. We need to do everything possible to continue supporting the existing users of Paine Field. Adding a few passenger flights at Paine Field would complement their operations.

What do you say to the people in Mukilteo and other communities who are concerned about increased aircraft noise?

We want to hear the concerns and see that they are addressed. Welcome the involvement of people who are concerned about potential negative impacts of passenger operations at Paine Field. Given the 400 flight operations at Paine Field today, we believe the increase in aircraft noise will be minimal. We'll encourage the county, the airlines, federal officials to do whatever is possible to minimize noise impacts.

Would aircraft be allowed to depart and arrive at night?

We expect the few flights at day that would operate out of Paine Field would do so during daylight hours – that's when most people want to travel. Aircraft have a right to operate 24 hours a day now at Paine Field, although there aren't very many flights during night time hours.

What improvements are needed to make Paine Field ready for passenger service? Who would pay for them?

Paine Field is one of the best, most modern airports in the state. The runway, lights, communications equipment, etc., are all state-of-the-art. Access roads have capacity and parking is available. The only new facility that is needed would be a modest building that would be used by waiting passengers and for security.

Typically, the airlines that use airports pay for the facilities that are needed to support their operations. Often times, the airport operator finances the construction which is repaid with fees from the airlines.

We are not advocating for the expenditure of county general fund money for support the passenger service.

Wasn't the decision made a long time ago that Paine Field wouldn't become a commercial airport?

Everyone agrees – including us – that Paine Field should not become a major commercial airport, a "second" Sea-Tac. That's not going to happen for any number of reasons. The issue is whether it makes sense to add a few passenger flights into the mix of 400 current operations a day now. Passenger service is not prohibited at Paine Field, in fact we believe Snohomish County is required to allow passenger service.

What about all of the people who bought homes near Paine Field with the assurance that air operations wouldn't increase?

Actually, the noise levels around Paine Field today are far below what was forecast in the past. That's because aircraft today are far quieter than they were just a few years ago – and they are getting quieter all the time as airlines upgrade their fleets to newer planes.

Paine Field already has 400 or so flight operations a day today – adding 5, 10 or 20 commercial flights a day will not add appreciably to current noise levels.

Opponents say the only beneficiaries of commercial air service at Paine Field are the individuals who own large parcels of land near the airport who expect to see their property values increase. What is your reaction?

The people of Snohomish, Island and Skagit county will be the beneficiaries of passenger air service from Paine Field – they're the folks who have to endure the ever increasing distance to Sea-Tac – the traffic, the high cost of gas, the parking hassles and the security lines.

The minimal amount of passenger air service at Paine Field is not likely to spur new commercial land development around the airport. There really aren't any private commercial facilities that will be needed to support commercial air service.

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