



COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM

Item No. 7a

BRIEFING ITEM

Date of Meeting July 25, 2017

DATE: June 21, 2017
TO: Dave Soike, Interim Chief Executive Officer
FROM: Michael Ehl, Director, Airport Operations
Wayne Grotheer, Director, Aviation Project Management Group
Clare Gallagher, Director, Capital Project Delivery/Public Affairs
SUBJECT: Flight Corridor Safety Program – Sites P-4 and P-5 Briefing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project is part of a multi-year program approved in November, 2016 by Commission to manage obstructions consisting of trees and other vegetation at and around Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, and replanting lower-height vegetation on or near the removal sites. Phase 1 work, the removal and replanting of obstructions on Port property, is partially complete. Work in two sites (P-4 and P-5) along South 200th Street has been deferred at the request of the Commission to allow for additional public input and for Port staff to further evaluate the removal and replanting approach for these sites based upon the input received. Port staff held a public workshop on June 5, 2017, created an online open house <http://seasafecorridor.infocommunity.org/>, responded to correspondence, and held meetings with individual members of the community when requested. Based on the public’s input, Port staff has revised the approach so that the obstruction removal of sites P-4 and P-5 occurs in a phased manner by limiting the removal to only removing the existing obstructions and protecting the potential obstructions and understory vegetation to the degree possible. The revised replanting approach includes planting lower-growing conifers and other trees within P-4 and P-5, increasing the size of trees and density for buffer areas, and adding a replant area to the south of Sites P-4 and P-5 where tall-growing conifers can grow without risk of becoming future obstructions.

This briefing details the progress made over the last quarter on developing a revised approach for Areas P-4 and P-5.

Alternatives Development

To identify alternatives, Port staff executed a service directive with CH2M Hill (Consultant) to provide up to twelve removal and replanting alternatives for sites P-4 and P-5. These alternatives were developed with both qualitative (site observation and public comments) and quantitative (number of obstructions and disturbed areas) considerations. The summary evaluations included an analysis of the removal alternatives, phasing, obstruction quantities, planting options for trees and shrubs, and invasive species treatment.

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Port staff comprised of Aviation Operations, Aviation Project Management Group, Public Affairs, Environmental and Construction Management conducted an internal alternative selection workshop to review the twelve proposed alternatives. The alternatives were assessed and weighed against a combination of public interest and Port objectives. Four removal alternatives and three replanting alternatives were selected from the initial twelve.

Alternatives eliminated from further consideration included those relying upon tree topping and lighting to mitigate the obstructions. Tree topping alternatives were not considered further as this action would create raptor nesting habitat and thereby increase wildlife hazard to aircraft. Alternatives relying upon lighting obstructions were eliminated due to the number of obstructions that would need to be addressed, the impact to airport operations and Federal Aviation Administration guidance regarding vegetation and obstructions.

The remaining following four removal alternatives were considered feasible for both sites P-4 and P-5:

- (1) Removal of existing obstructions (trees currently penetrating the Flight Safety Corridor), potential obstructions (trees within 6' of penetrating the Flight Safety Corridor) and all understory vegetation (non-obstruction vegetation consisting of smaller trees and shrubs growing beneath large trees).
- (2) Removal of existing obstructions and potential obstructions with future obstructions removed in 7 to 10 years as determined necessary (protect understory)
- (3) Removal of existing obstructions only (protect potential obstructions and understory) with potential obstructions removed in approximately 5 years and future obstruction in 7 to 10 years as determined necessary.
- (4) Phased removal of existing obstructions, potential obstructions and understory

The following three replanting alternatives were considered feasible for both sites P-4 and P-5:

- (1) Re-establish a low-growing forest on-site
- (2) Re-establish a low-growing forest on-site with a vegetation barrier
- (3) Replace trees on-site and create a tall-growing forest in close proximity to sites P-4 and P-5

After selecting the four removal and three replanting alternatives, Port staff developed a plan to engage the local community and gain their input on the preferred alternative.

Community Engagement

The Port hosted a Public Workshop on June 5, 2017 to seek public input on the removal and replanting approaches for sites P-4 and P-5. Attendees received presentations on the removal alternatives and replanting alternatives. Port staff and consultants answered questions and discussed concerns and issues regarding the various alternatives.

Attendees were asked to vote and provide their input on their preferred removal and replanting alternatives. For the removal alternatives, the majority of the attendees selected

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Alternative No. 3 “Removal of existing obstructions only (protect potential obstructions and understory).” For the replanting the public proposed a new fourth alternative; “re-establish a low-growing forest on-site with a vegetation barrier and create a tall-growing forest in close proximity to sites P-4 and P-5”. This fourth alternative, a combination of alternative two and three, was overwhelmingly voted for by the public.

In conjunction with the workshop at McMicken Heights Elementary School, the Port also initiated an online open house workshop with the information that was presented on 6/5/17. The online open house provided a forum to engage members of the community who were unable to attend the live meeting and allowed for comments and feedback to be submitted to the Port.

Port staff also visited, in person, the approximately 65 homes immediately adjacent to site P-5, to talk with homeowners, gather feedback and leave information. The primary information gathered that day was around Port attention to removing the invasive species and improving the maintenance of the property.

Recommended Removal and Replanting Alternative

After engaging the community, receiving their feedback, questions and concerns, Port staff will undertake the following removal and replanting alternatives for Sites P-4 and P-5:

- (1) Recommended Removal Approach
 - Alternative 3 – Public Favored
Remove existing obstructions only (protect potential obstructions and protect understory to the maximum extent feasible) (see attachment X)
- (2) Recommended Replanting Approach
 - Alternative 4 – Public Favored
Replant on-site at a 1:1 minimum replacement ratio with higher densities as needed to re-establish a low-growing forest, replant in off-site location with taller growing conifers, provide vegetation barrier adjacent to residential properties and road frontage

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING

- (1) Presentation slides

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

February 21, 2017 – Commission authorized for the Chief Executive Officer to prepare environmental, design and contract bid documents for the Flight Corridor Safety Program now-combined Phase 2 and Phase 3 at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport for \$2,373,000. The total estimated project cost is \$7,227,000.

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November 22, 2016 – Commission authorized (1) to award and execute a major works construction contract to the lowest responsible bidder, notwithstanding the low bid exceeding the engineer’s estimate by more than 10 percent; (2) change the contract duration as necessary and include additional scope that may be identified, including deferral of work on selected sites; (3) increase the project budget by an amount not to exceed \$475,000 for a total new project cost of \$3,206,000.

November 1, 2016 – Commission public meeting and briefing on the Flight Corridor Safety Obstruction Management program. The briefing provided an overview of state and federal laws/requirements, and staff’s recommendation of options to modify the current program. The public meeting also included an extensive public comment period.

October 25, 2016 – Commission considered authorization to award the irregular bid exceeding 10 percent of the engineer’s estimate to the lowest responsible bidder but took no action.

October 11, 2016 – Commission considered authorization to award the irregular bid exceeding 10 percent of the engineer’s estimate to the lowest responsible bidder but took no action.

August 23, 2016 – A special announcement to Commission by Aviation Operations Director, Michael Ehl, in regards to the Port issuing the final environmental Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance (MDNS) for tree removal and replanting as part of the Flight Corridor Safety Program in Phase One.

August 9, 2016 – Commission authorized to advertise and execute a major works construction contract in the amount of \$1,831,000 for a total project cost of \$2,731,000.

February 9, 2016 – Commission authorized to design, advertise and execute a major works construction contract in the amount of \$750,000 for a total estimate project cost of \$900,000.

November 24, 2015 – Commission briefed on the Flight Corridor Safety Obstruction Management program. The briefing provided an overview of state and federal laws/requirements, and staff’s recommendation of a phased delivery approach to complete the program.