October 24, 2018 Recap

The Sea-Tac Stakeholder Advisory Round Table (StART) meeting took place on October 24, 2018 with a focus on reviewing and discussing the Aviation Noise Working Group’s progress as well as developing an understanding of forthcoming fleet changes and their impact on aviation noise. This voluntary, advisory roundtable, convened by Seattle-Tacoma International 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, Alaska Airlines, and Lynden Transport are also members. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) participates as a non-member.

The Airport Managing Director reiterated his dedication toward trying to find solutions to community concerns. He is encouraged by the work of the StART Aviation Noise Working Group, which is currently focusing on identifying near-term actions to reduce the impacts of noise. Lyttle also shared that he met with City Managers from member communities for a mid-year check in. The outcome of these conversations was revisions to the StART Operating Procedures. He acknowledged that there has been some frustration that time for public comment during START meetings is limited. Lyttle is exploring other options to provide a forum for public comment.

Clare Gallagher, Port of Seattle, and Joelle Briggs, FAA, provided a brief update on the FAA Reauthorization Bill (Bill) that was recently signed into law. It was noted that the FAA is in the process of reviewing the law’s language to determine next steps necessary for implementation. Gallagher also provided a brief update on the Sustainable Airport Master Plan scoping period.

The Aviation Noise Working Group (Working Group) reported on their September 24 meeting and solicited guidance and questions from StART participants. The focus of the September 24 meeting was to review data on nighttime flight operations and to discuss runway use letters of agreement. The discussion focused on identifying additional data that would help inform the crafting of a possible voluntary nighttime curfew. The Working Group provided guidance to focus attention on exploring options for reducing aviation noise between the hours of 12:00 am and 5:00 am. The Working Group reviewed and discussed possible runway use procedures that could be included in a revised Letter of Agreement between the Port of Seattle and FAA. The Working Group is developing a draft work program to guide constructive next steps. StART members provided guidance and feedback to the Working Group.

Dr. Robert Stoker, Boeing Company, gave a presentation and fielded questions on forthcoming aircraft fleet changes and how these new aircraft are being designed to reduce noise and emissions. Scott Kennedy, Alaska Air Lines, and Tony Gonchar, Delta Airlines, discussed operational improvements to reduce noise and increase fuel efficiency in their fleets as well as provided
information about anticipated future fleet purchases and changes. Dr. Stoker’s presentation can be found here.

There were several questions following these presentations regarding aircraft noise abatement mitigation, percentage of engine noise vs. other aircraft noise sources, potential improvements to aircraft generated ground noise, engine silencers, whether topography of an airport impacts noise, improving thrust reversers, anticipated phase out of older airplanes, and status of noise retrofitting for A-320s.

Public comment was heard. The next meeting is scheduled for December 19 at 6 p.m., at the City of SeaTac City Hall, Council Chambers, 4800 S. 188th Street. The public is invited to attend.

StART meeting documents may be found on the Port of Seattle website.