FlyHealthy@SEA

A plan for protecting the health of SEA passengers and employees and restoring confidence in air travel
Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) is the largest transportation hub in our five-state region and one of the region’s largest job sites. Home to more than 200 businesses and a critical asset for all of Washington’s key industries, SEA’s business revenue tops $22.5 billion. SEA generates more than 151,400 jobs (87,300 direct jobs), representing more than $3.6 billion in direct earnings and more than $442 million in state and local taxes.

First edition August 2020. For more information contact Julie Collins, Collins.J@portseattle.org.

FlyHealthy@SEA Goals

• Maintain a safe and healthy airport environment
• Restore customer confidence in air travel
• Ensure confidence for airport-wide employees, tenants, and contractors
• Renew enthusiasm for travel
• Return passenger volumes and economic vitality
• Position for future public health emergencies

FlyHealthy@SEA Action Plan

I often use the word resilient to describe the cyclical nature of the aviation business. This takes on a whole new meaning during the COVID-19 pandemic. For Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA), weathering this storm and emerging stronger starts with clarity of purpose and a plan.

We’re learning hard on our promise to prioritize customer well-being and to deliver an elevated airport experience. Until there is a clear path to eradicating COVID-19, FlyHealthy@SEA is our layered, comprehensive action plan to help keep you safe.

This plan represents our commitment to communicate with the public about the steps taken to create a safe travel experience, starting with the rapid transformation of our terminal (p. 12). We’re also looking ahead by planning for more touchless technology, implementing new sanitation methods and examining potential health protocols and information systems (p. 17). Our capital facility planning incorporates new health considerations.

As always, I welcome your feedback! In the meantime know that we are ready for travelers whenever they are ready to travel.

Lance Lyttle,
Managing Director,
Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA)
Certainly 2020 has been a monumental year for SEA, though not in any way we imagined when launching our new brand. What looked like a year of exceptional advancements for one of the nation’s fastest growing airports, has become instead a sobering lesson in humility, agility, and the power of good planning.

“At SEA, we promise to create, through a passionate service culture, an elevated travel experience that’s inspired by the original nature of the Pacific Northwest. 2020 is a monumental year at SEA, ushering in a new era of customer-centered travel with better services, facilities, and amenities.”

— Lance Lyttle
SEA brand launch, January 22, 2020
While the COVID-19 pandemic delivered severe economic fallout, it has done nothing to change our focus on providing an elevated travel experience — in fact, it has sharpened our commitment to customer safety and well-being.

**COVID-19**

Public health officials announced the nation’s first COVID-19 case in Washington state on January 21. The onset of a public health emergency brought unprecedented changes to air travel.

By April 2020, SEA experienced its lowest passenger volumes since 1967. Domestic passenger traffic was down 93 percent and international traffic was down 97 percent.

**FlyHealthy@SEA**

In collaboration with our partners, we launched the FlyHealthy@SEA program in April as an overarching response to the pandemic to specifically focus on restoring customer confidence in air travel.

It is a layered approach that reflects the complexity in addressing this long-term challenge of providing health and safety assurances to customers, particularly in the absence of a COVID-19 vaccine.

**Phased Plan**

This is a phased effort, defined by immediate, medium, and long-term strategies and interventions. Our first phase is complete, accomplished in an urgent context that lacked our typical incremental elements — formal guiding principles, a budget, prioritized tasks informed by customer feedback.

As we work through future phases, we’re doing our best to integrate cost implications, customer feedback, and other insights in real time, recognizing that the situation is unpredictable, and the moment calls for innovation.

In the June issue of The Economist, Editor-in-Chief Zanny Minton Beddoes succinctly outlined the “winning combination” needed to confront global catastrophes like the COVID-19 pandemic: “Practical plans, the kit those plans require and the capacity to enact them.”

We strive for that winning combination in the FlyHealthy@SEA plan, which captures the work accomplished to date, and establishes a framework for the work ahead.
The SEA Recovery Committee is a cross-airport team of six subcommittees:

1. Health
2. Public policy & advocacy
3. SEA business partners
4. Traveling public communications
5. Customer feedback
6. Terminal & landside customer experience

To date, we have initiated more than two dozen actions, including physical changes, new procedures, and efforts to influence passenger and employee behavior.

Our efforts focus on cleanliness (enhanced cleaning, hand sanitizer, touchless technology) and health (masks, physical distancing, plastic barriers, health screening, travel tips, on-site medical services). We act based on the expertise and insights of many, including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state and county public health department guidelines, Port of Seattle business forecasting, innovation, and customer feedback teams, as well as local and national customer surveys, tenant input and industry partner networks.

Our approach incorporates multiple perspectives to ensure a comprehensive response.

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Cleanliness, health, and expert insight

The work is being implemented in three phases:

Prepare (Spring 2020)
Adjust (Summer/Fall 2020)
Beyond (2021 forward)

Note that timeframes are fluid depending upon the status of the pandemic and impacts on passenger volumes.

Traveling public communications Examples of safety visuals used throughout SEA.

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Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
Practice physical distancing 6 feet (2 meters).
Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, and throw it away.
Wear a mask or face covering.

Cleanliness, health, and expert insight

#FlyHealthySEA
Help stop the spread.

To date, we have initiated more than two dozen actions, including physical changes, new procedures, and efforts to influence passenger and employee behavior.
Changing landscape
An emergent virus means constantly changing information about protocols and recommendations regarding numerous issues, including: the nature of COVID-19 and its cycles; the economic ability of people and businesses to travel; the way business travel might change due to remote-working success; Port and budget unknowns; whether Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will take on aspects of the work; supply chain reliability.

Lack of space for physical distancing
This is already an issue even with passenger volumes at historic lows. We do not have enough room in key areas, such as security queues, gate waiting areas, the satellite train system, baggage claim and public transit to meet physical distancing guidelines as traffic increases.

Port financial challenges
SEA generates the majority of the revenue (82%) for the Port of Seattle. Fewer passengers mean dramatic reductions in significant revenue sources such as parking, airport dining and retail and landing fees. Also:

• the Port must maintain ample debt coverage ratios;
• the FAA limits how airport funds can be spent (e.g. airports cannot spend airport-generated revenue on health screening programs);
• the Port provided financial relief to numerous airport-related businesses, an unanticipated expense.

Port statutory authority limitations
We will need strong cross-agency partnerships to succeed. For example, providing “health care services” is outside the Port’s statutory authority as a special-purpose government with an economic development mission.

Tradeoffs regarding personal data
For example, touchless technology solutions like facial recognition raise privacy concerns.

Our only blueprint for airport recovery from a pandemic is the one you’re holding in your hands. Thus, like the best pilots, we’re relying on our knowledge, instincts and instruments — in this case a range of trusted experts — to point toward a safe landing, while navigating a host of challenges along the way, including:

Top four locations travelers are concerned about coming into contact with COVID-19:

1. On the Plane (54%)
2. Security Checkpoint (48%)
3. Other Passengers (41%)
4. Restrooms (39%)

69% of travelers say they will return within six months.


With any great challenge comes the prospect of doing better.

Opportunities

Healthier travel
We are in the midst of establishing new standards and practices that will make healthier travel the new normal. The pandemic changes how we look at everything we do, including new projects at SEA (e.g. South Satellite renovations) which will now include reviews through a health and hygiene lens.

Might there be a time in the future when people no longer blame their latest cold on their last flight?

Increased resilience
These FlyHealthy@SEA strategies, along with this plan and its deliverables, position SEA as a more resilient employer, landlord, partner and host to the millions of passengers who pass through our gates each year. In fortifying our ability to face another public health emergency or other catastrophe that forces drastic reductions in air traffic and passenger volumes we strengthen SEA’s ability to sustain its role as one of the region’s essential economic engines.

Delivering the promise
This public health crisis gives us the chance to deliver on our promise of an elevated travel experience in an urgent new way. Everything we learn contributes to creating a better experience. We are showing what it means to keep customer well-being at the heart of SEA operations and decision-making.

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2. Security Queues

- Contract for additional checkpoint deep cleaning to be completed August 2020
- Pursuing Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC), the worldwide cleaning industry association, have established a formal partnership to accredit airports that meet the highest levels of cleanliness and safety at their facilities to minimize risk from coronavirus and other infectious agents
- Use new customer feedback tools to measure satisfaction and adjust cleaning protocols as needed
- Work with janitorial contractor for ongoing assessments of emerging new products and methods

3. Restrooms

- Enhanced strength and frequency of cleaning
- Installing 200+ touchless paper towel dispensers
- Install-touchless soap dispensers
- Optiwave monitoring and feedback system installed at all restrooms
- Directional arrows added at restroom entrances for one-way flow
- Introducing new cleaning technologies such as electromagnetic sprayers, and a UV-C system for sanitizing escalator handrails
- Revised design requirements for future restrooms. Auto-flush toilets are new requirement

4. Plastic barriers to protect travelers and airport employees in close contact areas

- Installed 200+ barriers

5. Remove seating

- Airport-owned food court style seating reduced at Central Terminal Expansion (CTE) by 40 chairs, reduced by 60% at South Satellite, D Concourse
- Place gate waiting area stickers

6. Capacity limits in restaurants

- Per Governor’s phases
- Re-opened limited in-restaurant dining (based on Governor’s phases)
- Accelerated launch of food ordering App (1Q21)

7. Capacity limits in trains

- Installed signage limiting train ridership
- Tested closure of B and C STS stations to reduce ridership
- Removed STS passenger limits; added staffing to assist in NSAT
- Added significant signage for social distancing and masking on all trains
- Added signage recommending people walk from A to B and from C to D Concourses
- Opening of new International Arrivals Facility bridge in 1Q21 will reduce STS traffic from SAT to Main Terminal traffic
- Reopening of 3rd train car to NSAT

8. Health Services

- Consider terminal space for tenant wellness center
As a key source of information for the traveling public regarding COVID-19, we are in constant communication across all channels regarding health-related changes and actions at SEA. Our aim is to be highly responsive to customer concerns and deliver transparent and frequent communication with airport stakeholders and employees.

**Communicate: Crisis to Confidence**

**9. Communication/Media**

- **DONE**
  - Frequent press releases, media briefings, interviews, and updates as needed
  - Web: COVID-19 info, FAQs, etc.
  - Weekly newsletters: FlyHealthy@SEA (external), This Week@SEA (internal)
  - Blog posts, videos, tours
  - Customer responses: social, e-mail, phones, in-person

- **DOING**
  - Ongoing communication
  - Launch SEA consumer newsletter
  - Paid Advertising: international services

- **PLANNING**
  - Ongoing communication
  - Adjust newsletter frequency?
  - Consider other paid advertising depending upon consumer sentiment

**10. Signage, floor decals and stickers reminding people to honor physical distancing, face coverings etc.**

- **DONE**
  - Installed 5,000+ signs/decals

- **DOING**
  - Maintain/refine existing signage
  - Added 1,000 stickers to leave space between seats in the gate waiting areas
  - Used 360 stickers for physical distancing in the passenger loading bridges

- **PLANNING**
  - Maintain/refine

**11. Audio announcements**

- **DONE**
  - New announcements; multiple languages

- **DOING**
  - Continue announcements
  - Message may be modified over time; current focus is “Mask Up SEA”

- **PLANNING**
  - Ongoing

**12. Digital messaging**

- **DONE**
  - Common use monitor and kiosk messages
  - SEA app
  - Travel alerts
  - FIDS messages
  - Clear Channel monitors
  - Port common use monitors – ticketing and gate areas
  - Roadway VMS signage on airport freeways

- **DOING**
  - Updated the SEA smartphone app to inform passengers of FlyHealthy@SEA initiatives and identify resources on its interactive wayfinding map

- **PLANNING**
  - Determine whether digital messages continue

**13. Launch SEA Partners (tenant stakeholders) group**

- **DONE**
  - ADR required to develop detailed plans for safe operations
  - SEA Partners (airport stakeholders) every three weeks; as needed task forces
  - Business Intelligence forecasting
  - Standing Groups (ISTAMA, Station Managers, AAAC)

- **DOING**
  - ADR tenants are closely adhering to Governor’s directives (e.g. temps, masks)
  - Continue — every 3-4 weeks; as needed task forces
  - Continue to provide forecast updates
  - Continue meetings with Standing Groups

- **PLANNING**
  - As pandemic threat subsides, retain the group meetings, evolve as needed as CX tool

**14. Civic leaders**

- **DONE**
  - Puget Sound Business Journal’s Straight Talk: Roadmap to Recovery virtual event where Port Commissioner Peter Steinbrueck and SEA Managing Director Lance Lytle spoke about plans to reopen the economy

- **DOING**
  - Tours (selected officials, business groups, civic leaders)
  - Add to FlyHealthy@SEA newsletter list

- **PLANNING**
  - Ongoing
Passengers want airports to follow the same public health guidelines regardless of local requirements.

STRATEGY #3

Deploy innovative products and procedures for a healthier travel experience

SSA Airport continues to innovate with options for seamless, contact-free travel. We’re exploring new technologies that facilitate a touchless airport experience, and state-of-the-art programs that keep you safe behind the scenes.

15. Hand sanitizer dispensers
   - **DONE >** 250+ installed; locations on App
     - Continue; consider additional signage to increase location visibility
     - Evaluating larger one-gallon hand sanitizers for food court areas

16. Medical grade cleaning and disinfecting products
   - **DONE >** Always used disinfectant; increased frequency for high contact touchpoints
   - **DOING >** Testing new cleaning products and technologies - see strategy 1, action #2
   - **PLANNING >** Maintain sufficient supply levels

17. Touchless technology
   - **DONE >** Exploring options for hygienic and contactless transactions:
     - Touchless and seamless arrival-to-boarding experience
     - Launched pre-booked parking so travelers can book parking prior to airport arrival as a convenient, cashless way to pay
   - **DOING >** Virtual Queue RFI released on July 28
     - Touchless Bag Tag capability (for common use kiosks) — working with vendor on software update
     - Securing additional ThruVision machines (eliminates patdowns for employees)
   - **PLANNING >** Implementation
     - Explore upgrade for access control system
     - Implement one biometric air exit device for international customers in the SSAT by end of Q4
     - Explore long-term installation of biometric technology for domestic customers
     - Implement Airport Dining and GRAB app

18. Maintain operations for essential airport support services
- Airport Dining and Retail (ADR) rent and other financial relief
- ADR business resources

19. Influence federal public policy development
- Secured CARES Act funding ($192 million) for SEA
  - ADR Dining and Retail (ADR) rent and other financial relief
  - ADR business resources
- Actions to keep the virus from taking off again
  - DRIVE POLICY DEVELOPMENTS
    - Assess business recovery; passenger volume growth
    - Tours for elected officials (w/airlines)
    - Ongoing updates
    - CARES Act 2 letter with other airports
    - Pursue TSA grant funding for cleaning & sanitization
    - Tour with WA DOH
    - Working with Governor Inslee on statewide approach to airport health
    - Assess business recovery; passenger volume growth

20. Face coverings
- Requirement to wear face coverings in SEA public areas began May 18
- Launched Mask Up Campaign in July. Continue through August
- Additional Mask Up signage being added in Concourses and Concessionaires in August
- PPE vending machines placed in terminal
- Potential for legislation implementing national safety standards at all airports, including possible mask requirements

21. Make internal audience aware of advocacy w/policymakers
- Briefed Port of Seattle Commission on CARES Act implementation and advocacy related to a next federal package
- Periodic updates to Commission, Executive and Airport Managing Director on status of CARES 2 along with advocacy at state level
- Briefing for Commission following potential enactment of CARES 2

22. Coordinate across Port departments — airport and portwide — regarding advocacy
- Convened FlyHealthy@SEA’s Policy Guidance and Advocacy Subcommittee
- Weekly meetings of Policy Guidance and Advocacy Subcommittee to ensure cross-department coordination

23. Seek partnership from federal and state policymakers on enduring changes at SEA
- Tour with WA DOH on 30 July for Elevated Body Temperature Proof of Concept
- Meeting with Public Health Seattle King County Aug 4/follow up with a tour
- Regular meetings with Governor Inslee’s policy team on direction of potential statewide airport standards
- Continued engagement with health agencies, county leadership, state leadership on potential statewide airport standards

24. Keep WA congressional delegation, other policymakers briefed on SEA actions/changes
- Tours and info on changes
- Monthly updates to state delegation regarding travel numbers and confidence in SEA

25. Temperature screenings
- In May 2020 the Port Commission directed its staff to develop a plan to facilitate temperature checks at SEA, which made our airport the first large airport in the U.S. to begin work on a formal plan for temperature checks and health
- RFP issued for medical staffing contract
- Tested temp screening equipment in FIS (June)
- Monitor/plan for possibility of “test before you fly” or onsite testing

26. COVID-19 Testing
- Monitor/plan for possibility of “test before you fly” or onsite testing

27. Public health emergency preparedness
- Track strategies. Identify critical items etc.
- Create Port comprehensive pandemic strategy plan

28. Anticipate new health processes
- Track developments around concepts such as IATA’s “One ID” or immunity passports
- Track contract tracing developments for airlines

We’re leaning on strong engagement with the airport industry — trade associations and other airports — as well as lawmakers and federal agencies — and establishing clear objectives to ensure we’re leading with best practices.
29. Use a disciplined structure to frame and regularly revisit at least 10 key unknowns, such as:

- “What health-related services will customers expect to see at an airport?”
- “Which touchless technology investments will create the highest level of customer confidence?”
- “How will common standards be developed for “immunity passports”, or other health certifications, and what will be the role for airports?”

**ACTIVELY EMBRACE THE UNKNOWN**

Actions to keep the virus from taking off again

**PLANNING**

- Pursue specific actions, such as Requests For Information, to gain understanding about potential strategies
- Pursue ongoing customer feedback through surveys and Port communication tools
- Develop pilots to explore new technology and processes

**DONE**

- Identified ten forward-looking key questions

**DOING**

- Reframing the questions based on evolving COVID-19 information
- Securing and analyzing customer feedback around key questions
- Researching new technologies and health screenings
- Pursuing best practice ACI Health Accreditation to glean new insights
- Leveraging partnerships to gather new information

**SEA is intentional about seeking information and developing best practices to address the challenges of COVID-19. We’ve formed tighter partnerships with industry partners and airport stakeholders. We’re exploring new ways to keep travelers safe and making adjustments as medical knowledge evolves. We’re constantly examining the “what if’s” to keep our focus honed on a safe travel experience now and in the future.**

**STRATEGY #5**

**Actively embrace the unknown**

30. Position SEA as an industry leader in COVID recovery through visibility, partnerships and information sharing.

- Participated in initial ACI activities (e.g. daily ACI calls with large hub airport directors, initial ACI Recovery Committee, multiple topic committees)
- Provided FlyHealthy@SEA briefings to numerous stakeholders
- Managing Director participated in numerous panel discussions (ACRP, PSBJ) and media events
- Shared signage concepts and communication strategies with other airports

**DONE**

- Partnering with the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) to pursue federal grant to explore a “pre-clearance” concept with health screenings

**DOING**

- Participating in panels, forums and tours with travel industry leaders (e.g. corporate travel managers, airlines, TravelConnect Virtual Series, etc.)
- Broadly sharing Mask Up campaign information with other airports
- Partnering with the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) to pursue federal grant to explore a “pre-clearance” concept with health screenings
- Building a COVID-19 Intelligence network
- Leveraging unique aspects of SEA (physical constraints, tech-savvy passengers) to build industry leadership around virtual queue processes
- Participating in ongoing ACI activities

**PLANNING**

- Leverage accreditations to position SEA as an industry leader
- Leverage unique aspects of SEA (physical constraints, tech-savvy passengers) to build industry leadership around virtual queue processes
Our airport experienced sudden, severe, and extended losses due to the pandemic-related reduction in trade and travel. At the same time, the Port of Seattle is well-positioned to lead the recovery.

Our approach is simple: stay operational and keep people employed. Provide targeted financial relief to ensure sustained airport services. Focus investment on the hardest-hit industries and communities. Aggressively implement safety measures to bring the public back to our gateways as soon as possible.

While aspects of our work have changed, our vision hasn’t. We are a globally competitive region with innovative industries, a cultural commitment to equity and inclusion, and a recognition that we must lead in sustainability. This continues to be our path to the future.

Looking ahead

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We are committed to customer health and well-being and recognize that each person’s comfort level about travel is different. FlyHealthy@SEA will evolve as new health information emerges and as travelers return to the skies.
For updates sign up for our FlyHealthy newsletter:
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