

ORDER 2023-08
AN ORDER OF THE PORT OF SEATTLE COMMISSION

...to pilot a program with Transportation Network Companies that expands the geographic area where drivers can enter the queue to pick up customers at SEA.

ADOPTED
JUNE 13, 2023

INTRODUCTION

Sea-Tac International Airport (SEA) ground transportation access for customers is supported by a robust fleet of Transportation Network Companies (TNC) and drivers. TNC drivers queue up at a staging lot commonly known as the South 160th Lot. TNC drivers assemble in the lot and are dispatched to pick up passengers. This lot is close to terminals and allows drivers to quickly respond to customers.

TNC drivers provide an important and valuable transportation alternative for SEA customers. TNC's provide as many as four million total pick-ups and drop-offs per year, generating close to \$20 million in revenue.

To serve airport customer demand for efficient transportation options, TNC drivers gather daily well in advance of peak times to ensure access to opportunities for rides. Because of current rules intended to prevent drivers from circling on the airport drives, drivers must queue in the S. 160th Lot, which on some occasions results in up to four-hour long wait times for drivers before being assigned to a TNC customer. To ensure their place in line, drivers must take all needed rest breaks, meals, and restroom breaks in the lot.

The Port recognizes that when drivers choose to wait in extended lines for customers, drivers need a sheltered space for breaks; and that clean, functional restrooms are critical to maintaining a safe and healthy workforce. In response, the Port is planning to install industrial style bathrooms and ten electric vehicle chargers in the lot. The Port has also developed several options for a sheltered break and rest area for drivers. However, the installation of a permanent shelter will take significant time and cost. Therefore, the Port intends to work with TNC's to reform the current TNC staging and create a pilot program to allow driver access to necessities while in the community, rather than being limited to facilities at the S. 160th Lot.

With customer service and the well-being of drivers in mind, this Order directs the Executive Director to develop a pilot program with TNC's that allow drivers to enter the virtual customer pick-up queue at offsite locations. Aviation staff shall also consult with driver advocates on the development of the program. This pilot will allow drivers to access amenities in surrounding

communities rather than waiting for hours in the S. 160th Lot. The Port will also engage with drivers' advocates and surrounding communities to understand how this change functions practically in the communities where drivers gather and access amenities.

TEXT OF THE ORDER

The Executive Director, or delegate, shall implement a one-year pilot project to reduce congestion in the S. 160th Lot at SEA.

This Order directs implementation of a pilot program to expand the geographic area in which TNC drivers can enter the virtual queue to pick up customers at the airport. This pilot is intended to help address the current congestion, wait times, and lack of amenities at the S. 160th Lot while a long-term solution is being pursued. The outcomes of the pilot will inform the need for permanent shelter and amenities within the S.160th Lot and highlight partnership opportunities with local municipalities to ensure drivers can meet customer demands while having safe places for break times and to access community amenities.

The pilot program will be implemented as soon as it is feasible from an operational, contractual, and technological standpoint and/or may be included in a new agreement intended for implementation January 1, 2024. Port staff shall conduct a review of the pilot one year after implementation.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE ORDER

The Port of Seattle has a history of working with drivers, organizers and TNC companies to improve conditions and provide efficiency. This Order will help direct a mutually beneficial arrangement to support improved working conditions for TNC drivers at the airport.

TNC drivers provide a valuable service to airport customers and do not currently have ready access to facilities and amenities available to other airport service providers. TNC operating companies likewise benefit from drivers being able to stage close to airport customers. Collaborations and exploration of cost-sharing opportunities could benefit both parties.