



COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM

Item No. 11b

BRIEFING ITEM

Date of Meeting June 9, 2026

DATE: May 22, 2026

TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM: Wendy Reiter, Aviation Managing Director
Marco Milanese, Community Engagement Manager, External Relations
Eric Schinfeld, Federal and International Government Relations Manager, External Relations
John Flanagan, State Government Relations Manager, External Relations

SUBJECT: SEA Stakeholder Advisory Round Table (StART) Annual Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018, the Port of Seattle launched the SEA Stakeholder Advisory Round Table (StART) in partnership with the Highline Forum-member cities and other representational entities, with a goal of enhancing cooperation and tackling the issues of most relevance to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport's (SEA's) neighboring cities.

StART provides a dedicated forum intended specifically for discussing and tackling airport and aviation industry concerns from Highline Forum-member cities and their residents. With the Port, the FAA, the primary air carriers, and the airport's neighboring cities all represented around the table, StART brings together all the relevant parties with a common purpose to share information, collaborate and achieve results.

StART's major accomplishments are primarily the result of efforts initiated by its two working groups: the Aviation Noise Working Group and the Policy Working Group.

StART OVERVIEW

Cognizant of SEA Airport's traffic and location within a dense residential and commercial area in the Puget Sound, the Port of Seattle is committed to building open relationships with the community and local cities that foster trust, accountability, and collaboration. An important component of that commitment was the creation of StART in early 2018.

The Port of Seattle developed StART to enhance cooperation between the Port and the Highline Forum-member cities of SeaTac, Burien, Des Moines, Normandy Park, Tukwila, and Federal Way. This voluntary, non-governing, advisory roundtable is convened by the Aviation Managing Director and was developed in partnership with the leadership from the Highline Forum-member cities and other representational entities. Wendy Reiter, the Aviation Managing Director, began

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serving as the chair of StART in 2026. Sarah Cox, the Director of Aviation Environment & Sustainability, serves as the alternate chair of StART.

StART provides all parties with the opportunity to:

- Support meaningful and collaborative public dialogue and engagement on airport-related issues;
- Provide an opportunity for the Highline Forum-member cities to inform airport-related decision-making;
- Raise public knowledge about the airport and its operations; and
- Most significantly, focus on identifying and implementing practical solutions to address community concerns about aircraft operations and the airport.

Each of the neighboring cities designates three members to serve on StART (two community representatives and a city employee), who are joined by representatives from Alaska Airlines and Delta Air Lines, and Port staff. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) attends in an ex officio role to provide agency expertise.

Meetings in 2025 and 2026 were facilitated by Andres Mantilla from Uncommon Bridges.

For the last several years, StART has empowered the two working groups to work on identified priorities outside of StART meetings: the Aviation Noise Working Group and the Policy Working Group.

For several months in 2025, StART members engaged in a comprehensive process to identify their shared priorities which, in turn, shape the topics StART members address and discuss at StART meetings and, when appropriate, what they act on as a group. The following are StART's finalized strategic priorities:

- Reduce Noise Impacts
- Environmental Justice/Air Quality
- Airport Growth and Capacity

StART continues to include topics at its bi-monthly meetings that are informative and prompt productive conversations. Some of the key areas of interest covered at StART in 2025 and 2026 are:

- The Port's Sound Insulation Repair and Replacement Program
- The Commercial Aviation Working Group (CAWG) and its mandate to evaluate the long-range commercial aviation needs of the state
- The Sustainable Airport Master Plan's (SAMP) Environmental Review
- And the recent launch of the Airport Roundtable of Roundtables

However, some StART member cities began to question StART's ability to effect change, and express concern over the relevance of StART and its efforts. This tension has led to a decline in

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support for collaboration on shared issues of interest; for example, the annual StART Day in Olympia this year was cancelled when at least two of the cities declined to participate.

Regardless of its challenges, StART continues to provide an important forum for candid conversations on all airport-related issues of interest to the community. In particular, the forum provides city and community representatives with direct access to the airport's leadership, the airlines and the FAA. Both working groups continue to make progress on tangible items that have impact on airport communities – from the passage of new federal policies to engagement in the Part 150 Noise Study process.

Achieving consensus or resolution is not always possible around many of the airport-related issues of interest to the community. However, the Port maintains its commitment to being at the table and to staying engaged with the neighboring cities through StART to make progress where there are opportunities for progress.

StART MEMBERSHIP

The size and extent of StART's membership is a decision solely made by StART's Steering Committee, which was established to provide support, guidance, and strategic direction for StART. StART's Steering Committee has received requests by other communities to join StART, and each time, decided to retain the current size of the membership due to the shared belief that the experience of the close-in Highline Forum-member cities is different and more multi-faceted than the experience of further out communities.

Changes to StART's membership or to any of StART's Operating Procedures cannot be made solely by the Port of Seattle. Consensus-based guidance is what shapes all decisions taken by StART's Steering Committee, StART's working groups, and StART itself.

AVIATION NOISE WORKING GROUP

Since its inception, StART's Aviation Noise Working Group – with a mission to prioritize and explore potential near-term actions to reduce and prevent aviation noise – has focused on its Aviation Near-term Noise Action Agenda, which includes several programs and efforts intended to provide aviation noise relief to the Highline Forum-member cities.

The Aviation Noise Working Group is composed of a subset of StART members, Port staff and additional staff from the Highline Forum-member cities along with other representative entities and a Port-funded noise consultant to provide expert advice.

Aviation Near-term Noise Action Agenda: In 2025 and 2026, work on the Aviation Near-term Noise Action Agenda continued but with more focus on results monitoring, considering potential refinements, and promoting the agenda's outcomes both with internal and external audiences. The Noise Action Agenda includes: The Late Night Noise Limitation Program, the Runway Use

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Plan, the planned glide slope adjustment, noise comment reporting and language discouraging reverse thrust and encouraging continuing taxi to takeoffs and the minimum necessary thrust.

Sound Insulation Program: Based on member interest, the working group dedicated agenda time at many of their meetings to the Port's sound insulation program. The single-family insulation work that's occurred over the previous decades, the current focus on apartment buildings and places of worship and the pilot program targeting previously insulated single-family homes were all discussed at meetings.

Part 150 Noise and Land Use Compatibility Study – A Part 150 Study is required by the FAA to update airport noise programs and establish eligibility for FAA grant funds. SEA's last Part 150 Study was completed and approved by the FAA in 2014. Airports typically stand up a Technical Review Committee (TRC) during a Part 150 Study and task it with providing technical input and guidance throughout the life of the study. Three working group meetings in 2025 dedicated agenda time to the work of the TRC. Along with appointed land use planners, the working group members participated on the TRC as de facto TRC members and were given significant opportunities to ask questions, provide input and offer recommendations to the consultant team managing the Part 150 Study on the Port's behalf. The role the working group played with the Part 150 Study and the TRC will continue in 2026. As the Study moves to the Noise Compatibility Program phase, working group members will have the opportunity to influence SEA's current aviation noise reduction and prevention programs and recommended new approaches for possible implementation.

POLICY WORKING GROUP

Because the Port of Seattle is extremely limited in its authority to address some of the core concerns that local residents have expressed about aviation activities, StART formed the Policy Working Group as a way to identify areas of consensus and collaboration between the Port and the Highline Forum-member cities on new tools, new authorities, new resources, new approaches and new engagement from the federal government, and to engage Members of Congress in pushing for these shared priorities. The working group has developed and continues to implement a shared Port-Cities Federal Policy Priorities agenda.

The working group is comprised of a subset of StART members, Port staff, and additional staff from the Highline Forum-member cities along with U.S. Congressional staff from offices that represent the Highline Forum-member cities.

Federal Level

At the Federal level, the working group prioritized advocacy to implement the four legislative successes from the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024. For example, StART advocated for the FAA Reauthorization to include a renewal of the FAA's Environmental Mitigation Pilot Program; in 2025, StART made progress on that issue by successfully advocating to include \$3 million in the

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FAA’s budget, which resulted in an FAA RFP for projects to “to study the effectiveness of previously installed sound insulation treatments in residential areas associated with large-hub airports to facilitate future noise mitigation projects.”

In addition, StART continues to work toward implementation of new policy priorities. For example, after eight years of advocacy, Congress passed legislation sponsored by US Senator Murray and US Representative Smith to allow for homes located within the airport’s current FAA-recognized noise contour that meet broader criteria for “failed” insulation to be eligible for secondary investments.

The Working Group continues to focus on this dual track – implementing Congressionally-approved policies while finding opportunities for new progress – in 2026.

State Level

The State’s challenging budgetary outlook meant that StART members advocating individually in Olympia focused on ‘defense’, seeking to ensure that existing programs did not lose funding. In those efforts, members were largely successful. The Policy Working Group did not find unanimous agreement on a set of shared State-level priorities for the 2026 session; however individual StART members were able to achieve modest progress on policies likely to impact SEA’s neighboring cities. Several budget and policy items of major consequence were raised by the Legislature, heard publicly, and should hopefully be ripe for action in 2027.

Legislative Highlights:

- HB 1303 (Dead) – Adds environmental justice (EJ) to the SEPA review process, including by adding an EJ component to the elements of the environment under SEPA and to the SEPA checklist. Anticipate seeing an updated version of this bill in 2027.
- SB 5652 (Dead) – At a high level, establishes a new set of processes, working groups, and planning requirements geared towards air quality and aircraft noise in SEA’s neighboring cities.
- SB 5898, 5989, and 6240 (Dead) – Addressing the State of Washington’s long-term non-compliance with existing FAA guidelines about use of aviation fuel tax revenues collected by the State. Each bill takes a distinct approach, but collectively they address the non-compliance issue by ensuring that fuel tax dollars are dedicated back towards ‘aviation purposes’ generally. There is likely to be renewed conversation in 2027 about carrying forward an omnibus version of these bills.

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING

- (1) StART Aviation Near-term Noise Action Agenda Summary
- (2) Presentation

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PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

May 27, 2025 – The Commission was briefed on StART’s 2024/25 Annual Report

May 14, 2024 – The Commission was briefed on StART’s 2023/24 Annual Report

March 28, 2023 – The Commission was briefed on StART’s 2022 Annual Report

March 22, 2022 – The Commission was briefed on StART’s 2021 Annual Report

March 9, 2020 – The Commission was briefed on StART’s 2019 Annual Report

January 22, 2019 – The Commission was briefed on StART’s 2018 Annual Report