

Media Advisory – Dec. 4, 2009

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Commercial air assessment available for review, comment

A draft environmental assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act on two proposals to initiate commercial air service at Paine Field was released Friday for public review and comment.

The environmental review was conducted in response to two requests to begin commercial air service at Paine Field received by Snohomish County in 2008. Although Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon and some County Council members have said they do not support commercial air service at Paine Field, federal law obligates the county to accommodate commercial service. Federal law does not allow the county to prohibit or limit scheduled passenger air service. Instead, it requires that the county negotiate with the airlines in good faith to accommodate their proposed service.

Horizon Airlines has indicated it wants to operate four times a day to Portland and twice per day to Spokane, using 75-seat Bombardier Q400 turboprop airplanes on both routes. Allegiant has said it plans to operate twice a week to Las Vegas, using 150-seat MD83 jet aircraft.

Before airlines may begin commercial service, the FAA must amend the county's operating certificate for Paine Field as well as the airlines' operating specifications. The county was required to prepare the environmental assessment for FAA approval before those amendments can occur. The preparation of the environmental assessment was funded by an FAA grant and by the time reviews are finished is expected to have cost more than \$450,000.

Key points of the draft environmental assessment include:

1. Considering all current aircraft operations (take offs and landings) at Paine Field, federal noise thresholds are not expected to be exceeded by these additional flights.
2. Traffic mitigation fees will be required, though expected increases in vehicular traffic at Paine Field will not cause any Snohomish County arterials or Mukilteo, Washington State DOT, or Everett intersections to change to a deficient level of service.
3. Emissions affecting air quality will be minimal and below federal impact thresholds.

The draft environmental assessment is available for review at the airport office, on the Paine Field Web site <http://www.paineairport.com/airserviceea.html>, at www.snoco.org/departments/airport and also in local public libraries.

The public now has the opportunity to review and comment on the draft environmental assessment before a final determination is made by the FAA. Comments may be submitted by email to cayla.morgan@faa.gov or airserviceeacommments@snoco.org.

Comments sent by mail should be addressed to:

1. Cayla Morgan, Environmental Protection Specialist, Seattle Airports District Office, Federal Aviation Administration, 1601 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98057-3356.
2. Dave Waggoner, Director, Snohomish County Airport, 3220 100th Street S.W., Suite A, Everett, WA 98204.

The deadline for comments is January 15, 2010.

Comments also can be submitted in person during two scheduled public meetings. Public meetings have been scheduled for Monday, Jan. 4, 2010, at Meadowdale High School in Lynnwood, and Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2010, at the Snohomish County PUD Auditorium in Everett.

Date	Time		Location
January 4, 2010	6–6:30 p.m.	Exhibits	Meadowdale High School in Lynnwood
	6:30–9 p.m.	Public Hearing consultant presentation and moderated public comment period	
January 5, 2010	6–6:30 p.m.	Exhibits	Snohomish PUD Auditorium in Everett
	6:30–9 p.m.	Public Hearing consultant presentation and moderated public comment period	

A moderator will conduct the public hearings, during which citizens will be allowed three minutes per person to comment, or written comments can be submitted. A stenographer will transcribe citizens' comments. The FAA will review and issue an environmental finding once the county submits the final NEPA environmental assessment. That final document will include any comments submitted on the draft document.

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