



December 15, 2020

John Parrott, Director
King County International Airport – Boeing Field
7277 Perimeter Rd S
Seattle, WA 98108

RE: Airport Master Plan and General Aviation Reductions

Dear Mr. Parrott:

I am writing in support of general aviation (GA) at King County International Airport and against the proposal in the Master Plan to remove over 75 parking and hanger spaces for light general aviation aircraft at the southwest corner of the airport. This is on top of the planned removal of GA parking at the northeast corner of the airport. And the removal of GA space at the southwest corner include three to four spaces used by the Museum of Flight for visitors.

The Washington Seaplane Pilots Association represents over 500 seaplane pilots in our state of which the majority fly amphibious seaplanes and need GA tiedowns or hangers to store their aircraft.

General aviation is the lifeblood of Boeing Field, and currently comprises the majority of the traffic operations at Boeing Field. Light aviation operations comprise a wide spectrum of aviation services, including training flights, air ambulance flights, sightseeing flights, and charitable flights. Over the past several years, thousands of pilots have learned to fly at Boeing field, many of these individuals have gone on to become airline pilots, corporate pilots, or better-informed engineers designing future jetliners. Thousands of rides for minority and disadvantaged youth have occurred because of light general aviation operators at Boeing field, and countless disaster relief and search and rescue flights have been launched from Boeing field. Critically, light general aviation flights create an opening for local members of the community to experience and participate in aviation and use the airport.

As it is currently slated, the Master Plan for KBFI will remove over 75 tie-down spots and hangar spaces in the southwest corner next to the Museum of Flight, in addition to the removal of tie-down spaces at the northeast corner. The deleterious impact this will have on general aviation operations at KBFI is impossible to overstate. There is already a critical shortage of aircraft parking in the Seattle area. KBFI is the closest airport to downtown Seattle. Currently, it is extremely difficult to obtain a parking spot for an aircraft at any airport within an hour drive of downtown Seattle. By removing over 75 parking spaces and reducing the footprint of space available to general aviation operators, King County Airport management will exacerbate the already critical state of aircraft parking and will likely price most light aircraft owners out of the Seattle area.

KBFI's own forecast shows a dramatic reduction in the number of light general aircraft operations at Boeing Field. This stands in contrast to the FAA's expected increase in nationwide light GA operations, indicating that the Master Plan's authors are aware that the proposed changes at the airport will essentially shut light GA operations out from the airport. The larger number of turbine aircraft will also come with a much larger noise footprint than the light general aviation aircraft that currently use the airport.



The effects of this will be felt across the community, not just amongst airport owners or the companies who service those aircraft. As general aviation dies in the Seattle area, children will no longer get aircraft rides, locals will not be able to take plane tours, and city dwellers will have no place to take flight lessons. As has been proven time and time again in other cities, an airport which is disconnected from the local community loses the local community's support. The overwhelming majority of community members in the City of Seattle will never be able to afford to charter a private jet, but nearly all community members can sign up for an air tour; take their child to a Young Eagles, Civil Air Patrol, or Red Tail Hawks event; or volunteer to help with general aviation-supported disaster relief. Shutting general aviation operations out of KBFI will separate the airport from the local community.

We request the managers of KBFI to reconsider the impacts that the Master Plan will have on not only the airport but also the local community and either:

- 1) Remove the alternative to convert the southwest GA tie-down and hanger spaces to cargo operations, or
- 2) Replace those GA spaces with an equal or greater amount of space in another location, and not eliminate the NW parking until alternative spaces are provided

In addition, there is space provided for access to guests of the Museum of Flight in the southwest corner of the airport. This provides space for three or four itinerant aircraft which are typically used for visitors to the Museum to access GA aircraft for rides or visits. This too is an important connection with the community to encourage support of the airport. We also request that KBFI modify the master plan to preserve these spaces for the Museum of Flight.

Furthermore, we would appreciate in your response to this letter a summary of the current number of GA Light Aircraft parking spaces today and what the expected number will be when the Master Plan is fully implemented.

Sincerely,

Stephen M Ratzlaff
President, Washington Seaplane Pilots Association
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