

**Mayor's column for
The Enterprise
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I have heard from many Edmonds residents lately about the “motorized scooter” issue. They have shared with me their concerns, particularly about the noise these vehicles make. Well, I’m here to tell you: “You ain’t heard nothin’ yet!”

Once again, there is a move afoot to bring commercial aircraft into and out of Paine Field in Everett. This is being done under the guise of “economic development.” Now I’m a big believer in economic development, but not at the expense of our quality of life, particularly when it comes to additional aircraft noise. Edmonds residents already are the beneficiaries of the Lake Union and Lake Washington seaplanes and their flight paths, not to mention existing flights to Paine Field and Boeing. We don’t need more planes coming and going overhead. An estimated 25 to 50 additional flights per day are contemplated, from 10-seat commuter planes to 160-seat airliners.

Recently produced projections for air traffic at Paine Field are frightening for those who live in the north Puget Sound corridor. The runway in use on south-wind arrivals directs those approaches predominantly over the Everett, Whidbey Island, Marysville, Arlington, and Snohomish areas. Departures are fanned out toward Puget Sound and the I-405 corridor. North-wind arrivals are reversed so that incoming traffic comes into Paine Field directly over Shoreline, Edmonds, Kenmore, Bothell, Mountlake Terrace, Woodway, and Mill Creek at heights of 2,000-3,000 feet. Departure cities affected are the opposite of this wind approach.

All this renewed talk began last January with Snohomish County government, the Snohomish County Economic Development Council, and Paine Field management leading the way. In addition, State Representative Dave Schmidt of Mill Creek introduced a bill to spend \$100,000 to study building a \$20 million passenger terminal at Paine Field.

Apparently the County has decided to do a “market survey” before moving any further. That survey appears to have been taken by some of the Snohomish County Chambers of Commerce. I’m bemused by local Chambers asking their membership if they would be in favor of increased flight traffic at Paine Field because it would be a boon to economic development. Let’s see, if I’m a Chamber member, I’m more than likely going to favor anything that increases my sales; so sure, let’s add more flights. What a self-serving survey!

Once the market survey is complete, the County, according to news reports, will do “an architectural and engineering plan for the new facilities.” Then, after those two steps, they envision a “long community-outreach process.” Seems to me that they have the process backwards. Shouldn’t they be asking what the citizens of this county want first, not after they’ve drawn up the plans and asked the self-serving questions?

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon was quoted last month as saying, “Mukilteo is not going to like to see that Paine Field is being recognized as a great economic generator” as he commented in a 35-page advisory report from his 19-member Citizens Cabinet. Well, Mr. Executive, Edmonds doesn’t like to see it either, and I’m sure other communities will share our concern. The report says that “Snohomish County should pursue passenger service at Paine Field.” It’s interesting to note that the makeup of the Executive’s “Citizen” Cabinet consists of “members who represent business, schools, government, the Tulalip Tribes and environmental interests.” I must have missed the “Citizen” part of the membership.

The 1978-79 Mediated Role Determination for Paine Field says, “Great care should be taken to encourage airport development plans ‘compatible’ with county-wide land use goals, guidelines and comprehensive zoning.” This type of expansion of Paine Field will adversely affect a large number of Snohomish County residents. To do so in the name of economic development dismisses the fact that a healthy, vibrant economy is also dependent on stable, livable residential neighborhoods, not to mention sustainable and increasing property values. In other words, our quality of life is at stake here in the name of economic development.

The communities of Everett, Mukilteo, Bothell, Edmonds, Woodway, Lake Forest Park, Marysville, Arlington, Kenmore, Shoreline, Snohomish, and Whidbey Island must be given full consideration by the Snohomish County Council before any future action is taken regarding expansion of flights at Paine Field.

Let the elected officials in your community and the Snohomish County Councilmembers hear from you about this plan before it is too late.