

October 8, 2025

Olympia Airport Master Plan Update (AMPU)

IT WILL IMPACT YOUR HEALTH, QUALITY OF LIFE, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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Valuable input provided by Jan Witt & Sharron Coontz

History of Port Districts



The Everett waterfront, c. 1905
(Asahel Curtis Photo Company Photographs, Public Domain)

- Cities competed to be terminus of transcontinental railroad (20 yrs before WA was a state).
- They gave away ports to railroads as incentives (“Choose Me!”).

History of Port Districts



Monopoly Millionaires Dividing the Country. Depicted in the cartoon are William Henry Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, Cyrus West Field, Russell Sage.

- Railroads then had a monopoly over ports.
- They didn't want to pay for any upgrades.
- Ports buckled under the strain of growth and became unsafe.

Ports lack checks and balances

- WA's 1911 Port District Act
- Corruption was common in cities and counties then.
- So the Act made port districts independent to avoid special interests.



View of Harbor Island, ca 1912 - Public Domain

Ports lack checks and balances

- But pendulums swing back.
- Now, special interests dominate some WA ports.
- Making money is #1 priority. Everything else is an afterthought.
- Hidden from view—most people never interact with the Port.



Airport Master plans = likely outcome



- Airports that get FAA funding must have master plans.
- Purpose: to meet “aviation demand forecasts.”
- Why? Safety.
- Get things in place in advance, so growth doesn’t cause airports to buckle.
- These are 20-year forecasts.

Alternative Scenarios



- Master plans must look at multiple alternative scenarios.
- Including a "do-nothing" scenario.
- Assess each scenario's ability to accommodate forecast.
- Assess environmental, financial constraints.
- Pick a "preferred alternative."

Plans Exceed Aviation Demand Forecasts

- Port predicts aviation demand will increase by 1% per year.
- But AMPU's proposals far exceed that.
- Port may be aiming for an air cargo distribution center.
- Lots of new warehouses being built.



Fortune Teller, by Albert Anker

What's in the Plan?



Victor Bezrukov, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

- 610 parking spaces
- 131 new hangars for more aircraft, including larger jets
- 259,000 sq. ft. area for passenger/cargo aircraft loading and unloading
- 6 gates
- 40,000 sq. ft. deicing pad

What's in the Plan?

- Helipad to accommodate more noisy helicopter traffic
- 40,000 sq. ft. passenger terminal
- Taxiway changes to increase capacity to accommodate ever-growing numbers of aircraft operations.
- A new turf runway, which could be a foot-in-the-door to a later paved runway.



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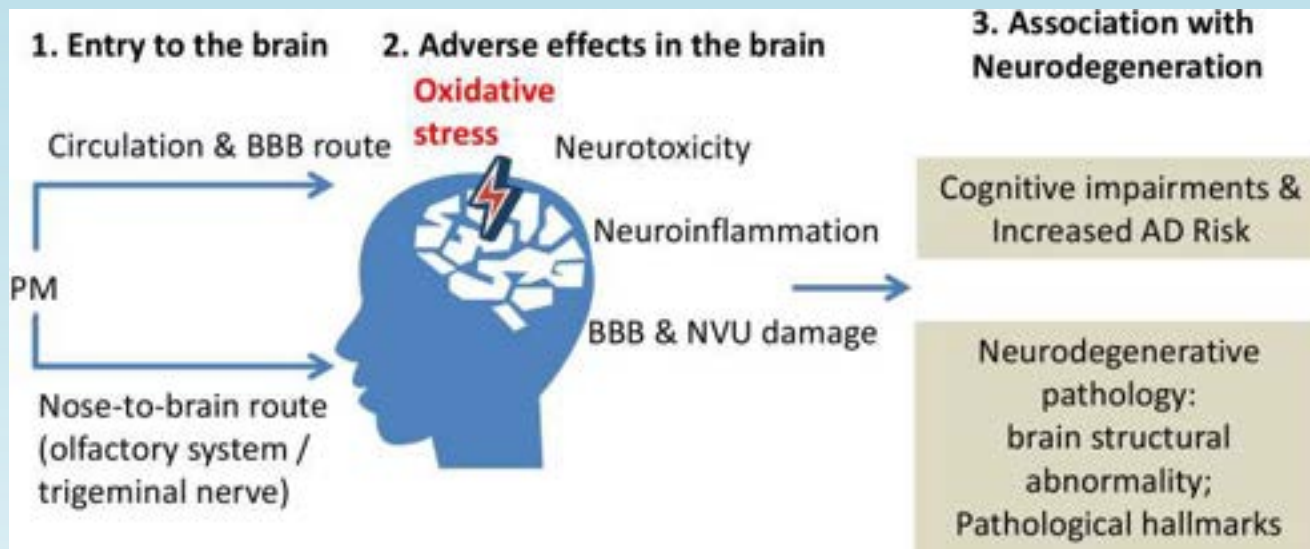
Many Planes Spread Lead

- Lead is used in fuel of many airplanes at the airport.
- It's a known public health concern, especially for children.
- Aircraft emissions:
 - respiratory problems
 - cardiovascular issues
 - many other health concerns



Joe Mabel, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

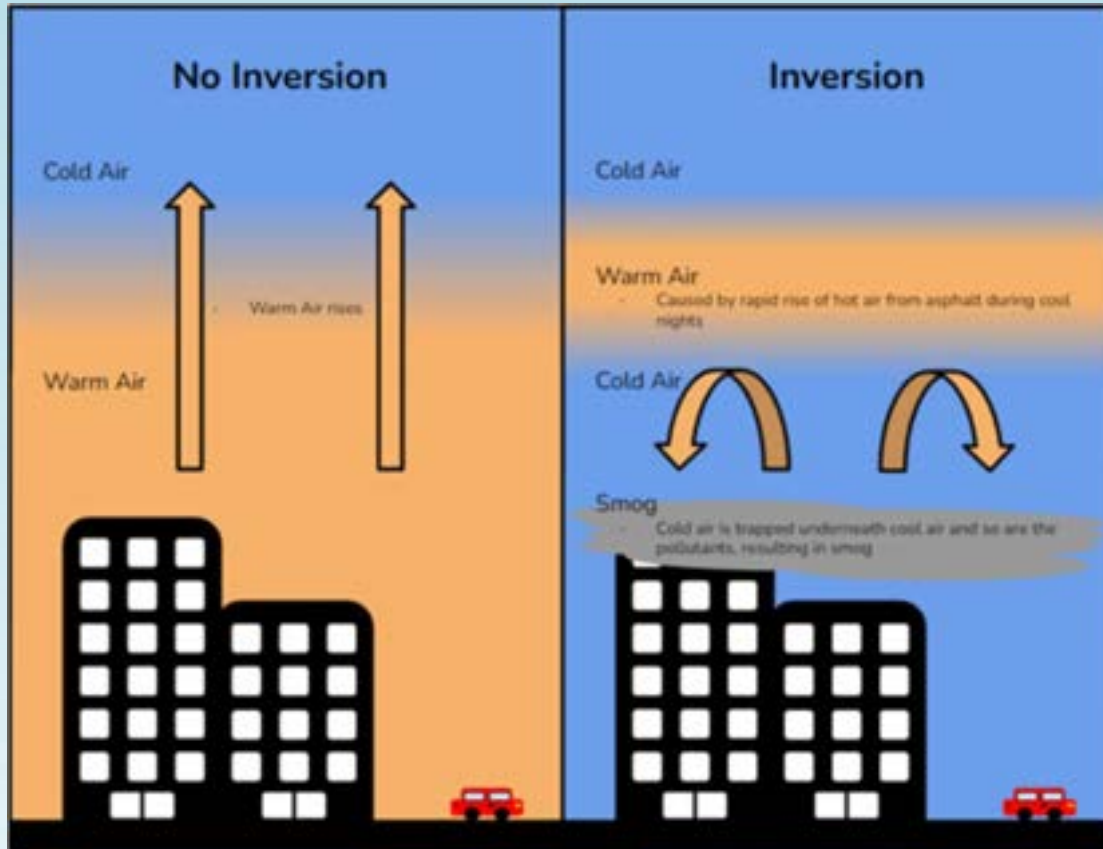
Aircraft Emissions



Ran You, Yuen-Shan Ho, and Raymond Chuen-Chung Chang, CC BY 4.0
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- Ultrafine particles (UFPs)
- Cross blood/brain barrier
- Affect brain, can enter placenta

Olympia's Inversions



- Olympia has frequent temperature inversions.
- Layer of warm air traps pollution on the ground.
- Inversions occur multiple times per month here.

Noise

- One of the most detrimental environmental effects of aviation.
- Hurts children's cognitive skills.
- Aircraft noise
 - increases the risk of hypertension,
 - increases the risk of stroke,
 - increases the risk of heart disease; and
 - disturbs sleep.

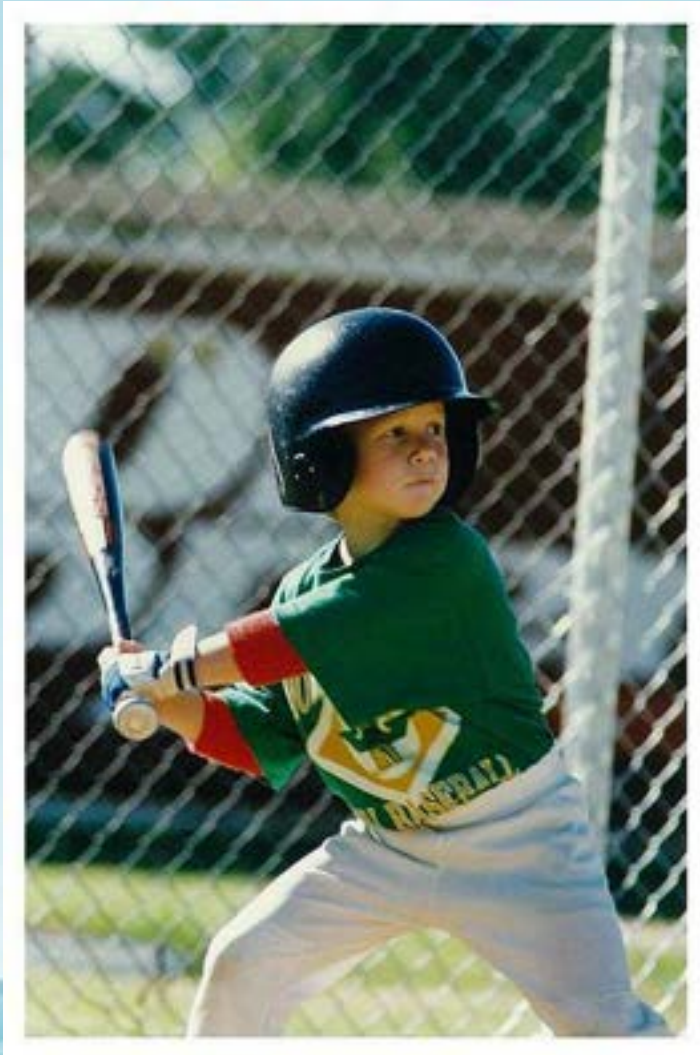


Credit: Simon Wheatley, CC BY-SA 2.0

Pattern of Practice (Exhibit 2A of the Appeal)

- **Dec. 1994 EIS:** Port said airport wasn't "planned for any changes." But it already was using eminent domain to take people's homes! And it did a "market study" and hid the study from the public.
- **1994-1995:** Forced entire neighborhood to sell and demolished their homes to allow extending the runway.
- **Illegal use of eminent domain:** You Can take people's houses only for a **legitimate public purpose**—not speculative future growth.





Public Domain Dedication

Make Way for Change

- **2005:** Extended main runway by 10% to allow more types of jets to land so that higher speed business jets could use the airport.
- **2006:** Strengthened main runway to increase capacity.
- **2022:** Signed Swire lease to turn 95 acres into a massive warehouse (a 75-year lease).
- **2023:** Told Capitol Little League it would need to move in “the near future” to make way for “aeronautical use.”

It Was the Port's Decision to Evict the Little League

- Port claimed FAA rules are why they're evicting the Little League.
- But FAA rules allow an exception.
- Port has hidden this from everyone.
- FAA worked with Port to hide it from Little League.



Exception by Nick Youngson CC BY-SA 3.0 Pix4free

Source: Paragraph 17.14, FAA Airport Compliance Manual, ORDER 5190.6B 17-4.

https://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Order/Order_5190.6B_Compliance_Chg3.pdf

Who Decides When to Build?



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- Port says it lacks control over when and what to build “inside the fence.”
- It claims if an airline wants to fund expansion, Port must build it.
- It claims it can only deny new infrastructure if outside the fence.

Local Control Is the Rule



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- Port is "responsible for deciding when and where airport development is needed...."
- Applies to **expansions** of existing infrastructure.
- Applies inside and outside "the fence."

Source: Paragraph 201(a), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Instructions for Airport Actions, FAA Order 5050.4B. <https://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Order/5050.4B.pdf>



Some people want airport expansion so they can avoid driving to SeaTac.

- Unfair to put these burdens on everyone else.
- They may not live under a noisy flight path.
- Lead and ultrafine particulate matter are invisible.
- If you don't know about these invisible killers, how can you be against them?

Source: pdf p. 42 at https://airport.portolympia.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2024/12/Chapter-4-OLM-Alternatives-v9-DRAFT-12_13_2024.pdf

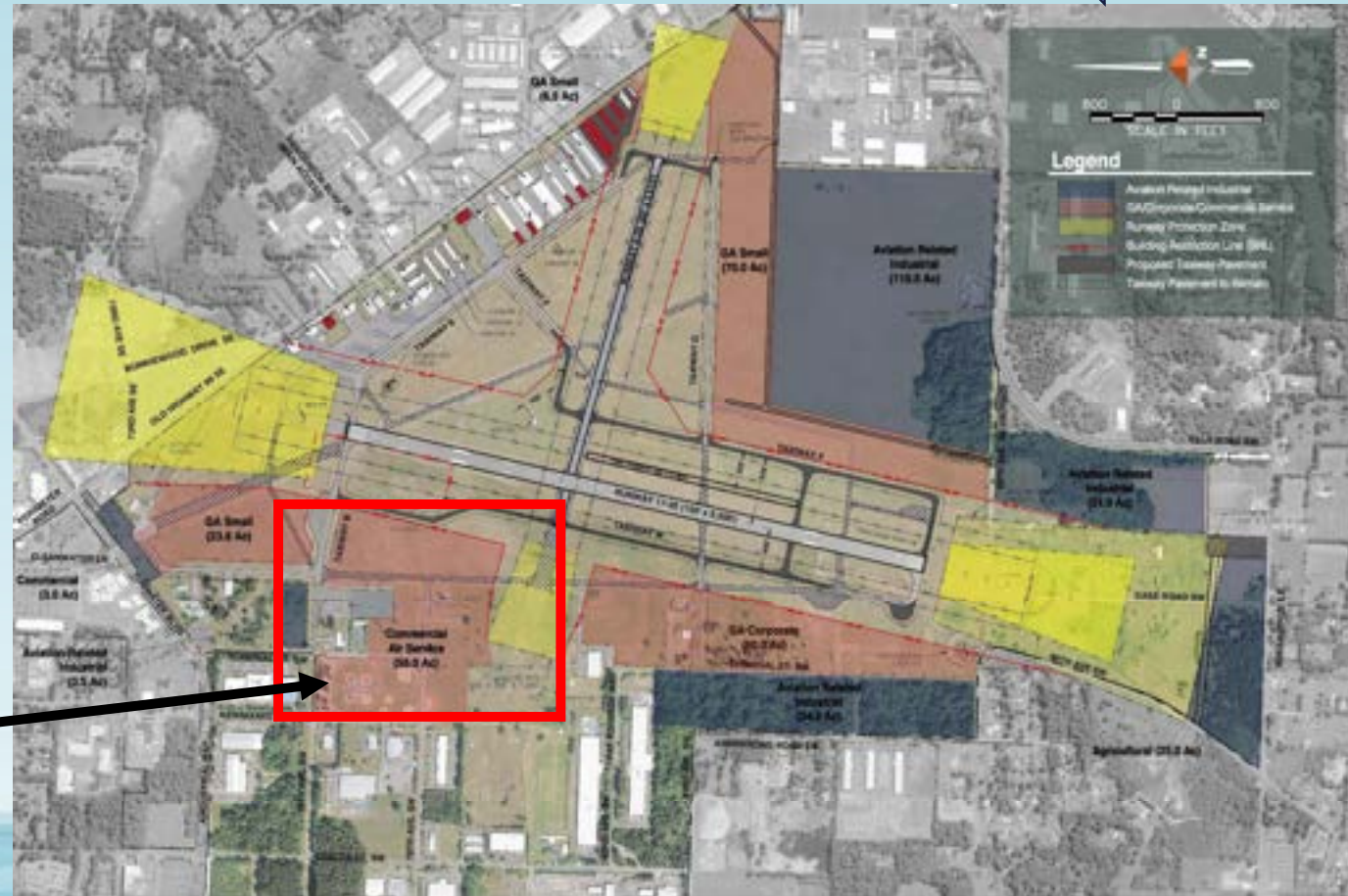
Port's “Preferred Alternative”

North is to the left



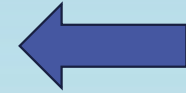
The Port wants to put passenger service infrastructure on top of Capitol Little League's fields.

Capitol Little League fields

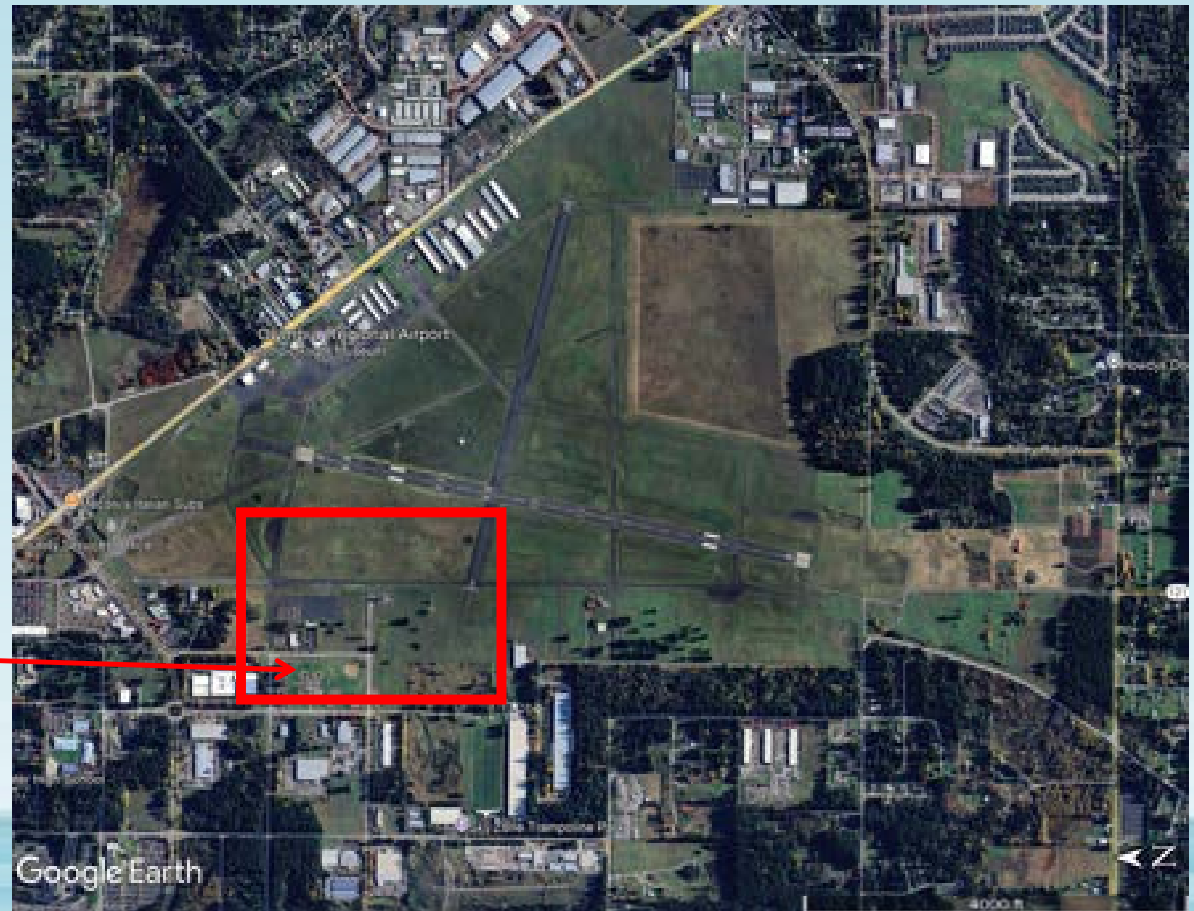


Current land uses
zoomed out

North is to the left



Capitol Little League fields

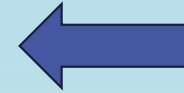


Swire lease available at https://www.upnotout.net/_files/ugd/f1b9a1_1d7f9f353cf84ccf9284f67333d81105.pdf

12/12/2022 Swire Lease

- Could create 95 acres of impervious surface.
- 75-yr lease.
- No environmental review done.
- Lots of public opposition.
- Big impacts (impervious surface, H₂O hog)
- The master plan doesn't mention it.
- The SEPA review doesn't mention it.

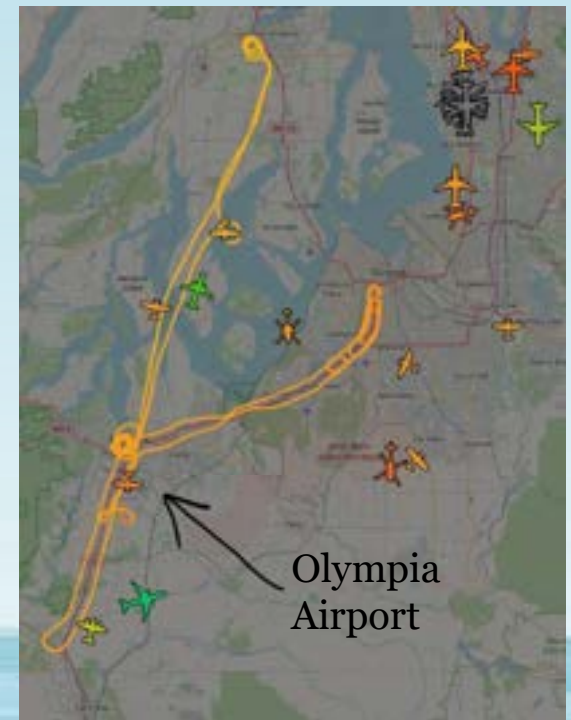
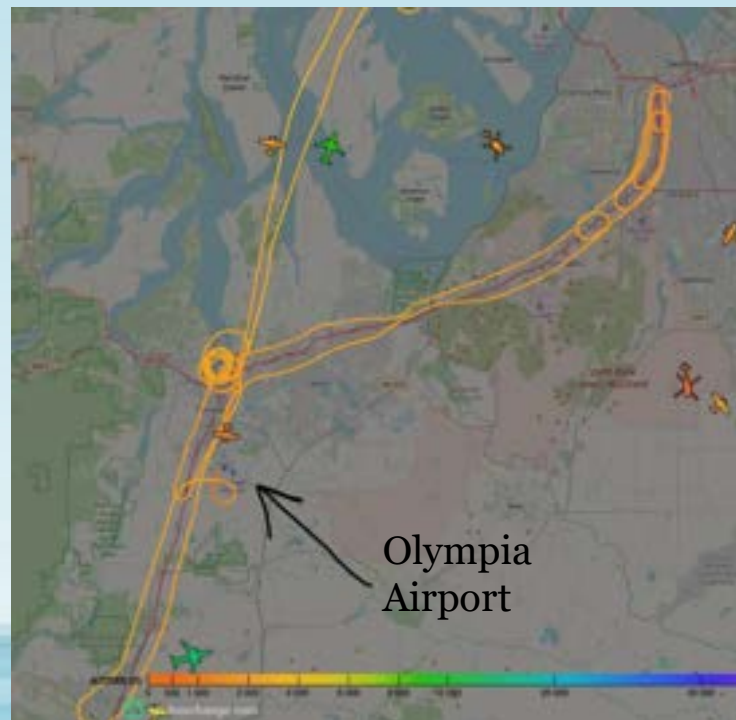
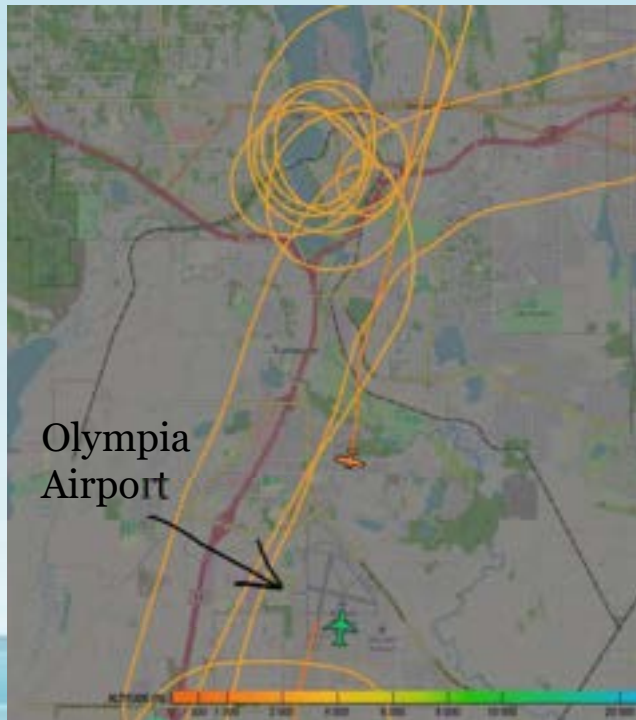
North is to the left



Great app showing live flight paths

<https://globe.adsbexchange.com/>

Example: Below is one continuous flight, viewed at 9pm on 3/5/2025.



Well-Functioning Rail Is Coming

- Rail is gaining momentum.
Expanding regional airports will delay it.
- ➡ • Podcast: *Reconnect America*.
- North/South high-speed rail line in early 2040s.



Photo: 子刚 chen

Yakima Wants to Be the SeaTac Reliever Airport

- Yakima wants to be the next large airport.
- Building fast rail across the Cascades can make that happen.
- This solves the problem of SeaTac overflowing.
- It undercuts any economic justification to expand Olympia Airport.



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Vote for Jerry Toompas and Krag Unsoeld for Port Commissioner



Things to do



1. **Sign the petition.** Google “Stop Olympia Airport Growth.”
2. **Join us in meeting one-on-one** with elected officials.
3. **Give public comment** at Tumwater City Council mtgs
4. **Donate** to the legal fund: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/stop-olympia-airport-growth>

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