Copenhagen Optimization is piloting its Virtual Queuing Solution at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA)

As the first pilot program in North America, the program is set to modernize the airport experience at security screening checkpoints by reducing wait times and decrease crowding.

As Virtual Queuing is starting to generate significant interest at airports around the world, SEA is innovating their seamless travel experience by exploring digital reservations for the TSA general security checkpoints in cooperation with Pangiam and powered by Whyline and Copenhagen Optimization. The pilot went live yesterday, May 4th, and the aim is to improve ease at the airport while also modernizing the passenger experience.

SEA is the first airport in North America to investigate a Virtual Queuing system as a solution for crowded, general screening lines. The pilot powered by Copenhagen Optimization´s Better Airport solution will operate daily through August 31, 2021 at Checkpoint 5 and be dedicated to Alaska Airlines' passengers. The solution is called SEA Spot Saver, and it is a free, reservation-based system. The pilot program will test if SEA Spot Saver successfully reduces wait times and decreases crowding to better maintain physical distancing.

"These are the innovations and ideas that we love to make our guest experiences more convenient and stress-free, especially as more people get back flying again," said Charu Jain, Alaska's Senior Vice President of merchandising and innovation. "With very little effort, guests can lean on technology to get them through the security process quicker."

Security screening zones are one of the most tightly constrained and consistently crowded areas of SEA, which is why testing the benefits of Virtual Queuing is especially relevant here. The program is set to help provide a better screening experience and create efficiency where demand is the highest.

"We can use technology to make the travel experience more streamlined and intuitive," said Port of Seattle Commissioner Sam Cho. "We appreciate the partnership of passengers and airlines to help test these programs for the benefit of our community."

Positive impact on the airport operation

Recently, the implementation of Virtual Queuing at airports has been accelerated by the regulations on physical distancing to fight the COVID-19 outbreak. However, for airports, the benefits extend far beyond the provision of safer environments to passengers and employees.

"Virtual Queuing, if applied correctly, can have a significant, positive impact on the airport operation," said Kasper Hounsgaard, CEO of Copenhagen Optimization. "It will give SEA reliable intelligence on the demand at their security operations across the day, it will allow them to predict queues, and queue areas can be organized accordingly to adhere to physical distancing demands."

At the same time, Virtual Queuing will benefit passengers by minimizing their time spent queuing, giving them a higher certainty about their security screening time and allowing them to spend their time elsewhere at the airport.

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Following the pilot completion in August, SEA will evaluate usage with passengers, analyze customer feedback, and evaluate increases to line efficiency. If successful, SEA hopes to launch a broader program as they continue to use staffing and technology to make the security checkpoint experience as efficient as possible.

Read the full press release from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport here. [paste link].

About Copenhagen Optimization:

Copenhagen Optimization is a joint software and consultancy company specializing in improving airport operations. We have practical experience from some of the world's biggest airports, combined with background and experience within mathematical optimization and machine learning.

All of this is encapsulated in our software solution BETTER AIRPORT® which enables airport operators to plan and execute their entire airport operation – before day of operation and in real-time and from curb to gate and back. Better Airport is a cloud-based solution that uses airport data and advanced mathematical algorithms to generate accurate forecasts and operational plans through an easy-to-use and incredibly intuitive user interface. It is currently deployed and live in operations in more than 20 airports globally, including JFK Terminal 4, London Heathrow, and Singapore Changi.

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