

Armondo Pavone, Mayor



MAYOR'S STATEMENT

April 12, 2024

Good afternoon, Renton –

I'd like to take a moment to address a few points of interest I've heard garnering a lot of attention around the Renton Municipal Airport. There's a lot of speculation out there, and some misinformation – and the fastest way to address that is to focus on the facts.

1. Is there a brand-new business coming into the Renton Municipal Airport? One of our long-term existing airport tenants (Pro Flight Aviation) has sold their existing business to a new operator (Dark Horse Aviation). Under the terms of the 35 year lease, the existing tenant has the express right to do this. The only role the city can play is in evaluating the new operator's financial capacity, experience in running an FBO, or fixed-based operator business, and compliance with Airport Leasing Policy.

This is not a new business, but a potential shift in focus of the business. The purpose of a Fixed Base Operator (FBO) is to provide fueling services to aircraft as well as ramp services for visiting aircraft. Pro-Flight Aviation has operated this business from 2009 forward. The new firm is looking to try to service jets shut out of Boeing Field; however, this was going to occur naturally as Boeing Field is taking on greater importance as a cargo hub and site of large business aircraft. Pro-Flight Aviation has traditionally serviced jet aircraft and sells Jet A fuel as well as Av Gas for propeller planes.

2. Will Renton Municipal Airport be opened up to 24/7 jet traffic? No, any business operations will be subject to the air traffic control tower operation hours - from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM in winter; and 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM during summer. The existing ramp operated by Dark Horse

Aviation can only accommodate 6-8 medium/small jets. The Renton Airport operates within certain limitations due to Airport Rules and Regulations and Airport Minimum Standards.

FBOs are required to maintain public buildings, like customer lobbies, offices, pilot lounges, restrooms, and adequate parking. They also have to provide a ramp area for aircraft parking for at least five aircraft. An FBO is also mandated to have regular operation hours schedule, open for a minimum of eight hours per day and seven days per week. After-hours fueling services must also be available either through on-call employees or shared schedules, but the operational and regulatory demands contribute to the limitations on the airport's 24/7 operations.

3. *Shouldn't this have been reviewed by the Renton Airport Advisory Committee?* In short, no. The only role the city has in this scope is to review the new operator's feasibility and have city council approve this. There are specific provisions noting that consent should not be "unreasonably withheld, conditioned or denied" by the council. If we took any other action beyond what is described in the lease, the city could have been open to an FAA Part 16 Complaint, or a potential lawsuit for damages as a result of losing the sale of the business.

RAAC has a limited scope as an advisory committee, and can make suggestions, but are not in charge of setting policy or changing lease agreements. City staff introduced a new Airport Director and updated the RAAC on airport construction at their February 2024 meeting, and advisory committee members will be introduced to the new operator at an upcoming meeting.

4. *Are City staff operating outside of their roles?* No – in fact, our city staff works tirelessly to keep the city in compliance with all guidelines, including the potential of future legal action.

5. *Is there a business leaving the Renton Municipal Airport?* The City of Renton is moving through the legal process of eviction of a tenant for a long-standing non-payment of rent. The occupied buildings in question were originally scheduled for demolition in 2015. The occupation of these buildings were at a deeply discounted rate, with an understanding that any repairs needed would be at the expense of the tenant. The natural end of the lease was slated for July 2024, we have moved forward with a lease termination date of March 31, 2024 in light of non-payment. It is the responsibility of the city to maintain safe, functional and market-rate buildings for future tenants.

One of the core pillars of our city administration is to communicate regularly and clearly with plain facts and direct language. At all times, the City of Renton strives to operate openly, transparently, and in the best interests of our residents. I welcome any questions and conversations about this topic, please reach out at mayor@rentonwa.gov.

Your Mayor,
Armondo Pavone

