

Pierce County Council
930 Tacoma Ave S, Room 1046
Tacoma, WA 98402

2 January 2015

Ladies and Gentlemen—

Attached is a copy of my letter to Mr. Dan Roach, Chair, Pierce County Council, and to Mr. Brian Ziegler, P.E., Director, Public Works & Utilities. I am very much concerned about the proposed concept of having a 24-hour security system at Tacoma-Narrows Airport, i.e. all gates closed not only during the evenings and weekends but during normal business hours as well.

As I attempted to explain in my letter to Mr. Roach and Mr. Ziegler, keeping the gates closed during normal business hours is not an idea that would be beneficial to the airport and the businesses located on the airport.

Sincerely,

Larry K
Tenant, Tacoma-Narrows Airport

Mr. Dan Roach, Chair Pierce County Council
930 Tacoma Avenue S, Room 1046
Tacoma, WA 98402

2 January 2015

Mr. Brian Ziegler, P.E., Director Public Works and Utilities

2702 So. 42nd Street, Suite 201
Tacoma, WA 98409-7322

Gentlemen--

I am a tenant at Tacoma-Narrows Airport (TIW), renting a hangar space for my airplane. I am very much concerned about security at the airport, most particularly the apparent proposal to have 24-hour/gates closed security. Having the gates closed during normal business hours is simply a horrible idea. I understand that Pierce County Airport/Thun Field (PLU) has already established the 24-hour security. I will keep my comments directed to TIW but some might also apply to Thun Field. All of us at the airport want our airport to be safe and secure yet any security system must be logical, workable and should do no harm to the operations or businesses within the airport. The concept of having 24-hour security is commendable in keeping the airport secure, but unfortunately such security is simply not practical. The airport gates need to remain open during normal business hours. How else can the businesses operate?

I apologize for such a long letter. It is simply not possible to explain my concerns clearly (hopefully) and use fewer words.

My last airport had 24-hour security. The tenants would rather not have had such security but we understood the need for it in the Los Angeles area. It provided tenants with minor inconvenience (gate entry cards) but we found we could live with it. Also, it is important to mention that the 24-hour security (gates closed) had zero affect on the local airport businesses. They all could be accessed from either the airport/ramp side or from the street outside of the airport. This is not the situation at TIW. In fact, most of the businesses would be negatively impacted by a 24-hour security except perhaps PAVCO, a flight school, and The Hub, a restaurant. Both have parking and access from the street. However, businesses such as HeliTrak (at the north gate), Tacoma Narrows Aviation (at the center gate), Tosch Aviation and the Avionics Shop (at the south gate) have no such access and their businesses would definitely suffer from such security. While some of their customers arrive in airplanes there are some who drive in to conduct business.

As I understand the proposed rules, the gates are to be closed 24 hours per day. Access will be allowed only through the use of a card key or by calling a business via the gate keypad. If there is no contact via the keypad then a phone number will be available to contact the business. Such a system could certainly work for businesses large enough to have someone in the office at all times to accept such access requests. Those such as Tosch Aviation and The Avionics Shop, for example, are too small to have continuous office personnel. Their limited personnel are often in the shop or on the ramp. They are may be in the middle of delicate maintenance which cannot be interrupted (for safety and continuity of the work), on the ramp running an engine or even elsewhere on the airport. It is just not practical for them to be readily available to answer all calls requesting gate access.

If the idea is to keep the airport secure, the 24-hour security/gates closed is not the answer. If a prospective customer calls a business to request access, how is one to know if they are a legitimate customer or merely someone who wants access for some other reason? How is the business to know? What is to stop someone from walking through the PAVCO office to the ramp or through the restaurant to the ramp? Both businesses must have such open access to the ramp due to the nature of their business. The airport simply cannot function and be totally secure!

Now, let us take this a step further. If the businesses at TIW suffer, we all suffer. As an aircraft owner at TIW, I am a customer of Tosch Aviation and The Avionics Shop. What happens if they lose enough business to the point where they move or go out of business? Where do we, as aircraft owners, go for our radio work? And, knowing the problem customers have getting to a business, why would someone want to invest in a business at TIW under those circumstances?

I would ask the Council to give this idea of 24-Hour Security/gates closed at TIW much thought before acting or before allowing it to be enacted. The airport should have open gates during normal business hours. A 24-hour security at TIW would do little more than to kill the airport in order to save it. This is not a good idea.

I would like to propose a suggestion. Close the gates during evening and weekends. Then, why not have full time security cameras (recording) at each of the three gates, with posted signs? This warning would do much to curtail unauthorized entry during normal working hours. If the cost is prohibitive, posted signs indicating surveillance is in effect (even without cameras) would still discourage such activity. It might also help to post signs at each gate indicating the speed limits, the need to use lights/four-way flashers on the ramp and caution unfamiliar drivers to remain clear of the ramp and taxiways. Posting signs, along with monitoring by tenants and airport staff (similar to a neighborhood watch), would be a much more acceptable approach to daytime security than having the gates closed.

Larry K
Hangar Tenant, TIW

Tacoma, WA 98406

CC: Mr. Stan Fleming, Vice-Chair Pierce Cty. Council
Ms. Joyce McDonald, Member, Pierce Cty. Council
Mr. Jim McCune, Member, Pierce Cty. Council
Ms. Connie Ladenburg, Member, Pierce Cty Council
Mr. Rick Talbert, Member, Pierce Cty. Council
Mr. Doug Richardson, Member, Pierce Cty. Council