



Serge Corbeil

Director, Government Relations, Local and Provincial
Directeur – Relations gouvernementales, régionales et provinciales

City of Prince George Mayor and Council

Attention: cityclerk@princegeorge.ca

**Re. City of Prince George Zoning Bylaw No. 7850, 2007, Amendment
Bylaw No. 9262, 2021**

Dear Mayor and Council,

I write to you on behalf of Air Canada to advise you of our opposition to the Rezoning Amendment Application No. RZ100727 allowing a cannabis store in the Z1 Airport zone. Air Canada opposes Bylaw No. 9262, 2021 which would amend City of Prince George Zoning Bylaw No. 7850, 2007. We urge the members of the City Council to reject the addition of "Retail, Cannabis" as a secondary use, only on the subject property, to facilitate a retail cannabis store at the airport. We strongly believe that retailing non-medical cannabis at an airport is contrary to the primary purpose of an airport and does not serve any public interest let alone any purpose for the travelling public.

Air Canada is proud of its long and fruitful association with the Prince George Airport and the surrounding community. Through multiple daily flights to and from Prince George, we have significantly contributed to connecting the city to Vancouver and beyond. Via our major hub at Vancouver International Airport, we connect the Prince George community to the world helping reach national and international markets and bring tourists to the region. We employ some thirteen employees at the airport in addition to third-party contractors.

At Air Canada, safety underpins everything we do. We conduct our business in a manner that ensures the health and safety of our employees, customers, the general public, contractors, agents, subsidiaries, and associated companies while meeting our obligations under all applicable regulations. As such, we have

serious concerns with the proposed rezoning amendment being considered by Council.

In light of this, we object to the characterization of flying by the proponent when they state that "Copilot's store will not only satisfy existing customer demand, but will improve the experience of airport travel in a world changed by COVID by offering a solution to reduce traveler anxiety..."

A cannabis store at an airport would send two main messages that are incongruous with aviation. First, it signals that consumption of cannabis is encouraged not only before flying (a stated marketing objective of the proponent) but more concerningly on board an aircraft. This may lead many to believe that consumption of cannabis onboard an aircraft is allowed when it is not. The end result would most certainly be an increase in unfortunate incidents onboard and having our inflight employees forced to police onboard consumption. On this aspect, I would point out section 602.04 (4) of the Canadian Aviation Regulations which states that "...no operator of an aircraft shall allow a person to board the aircraft, where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the person's faculties are impaired by alcohol or a drug to an extent that may present a hazard to the aircraft or to persons on board the aircraft." With the science on impairment due to cannabis consumption and related incidents still to be clearly and unequivocally established, especially in a cabin environment at a high altitude, prudence is called for before allowing a cannabis retail business to operate at an airport.

Secondly, it would have the very real potential of seeing travellers falsely believe that they can travel to their final destination with cannabis and cannabis products. As noted above, the Prince George Airport is connected via our direct flights to the Vancouver International Airport. From there, travellers boarding in Prince George can currently connect on flights to twenty cities in the USA and elsewhere in the world. This is not to mention the many more such destinations that are possible with one stop at our other Canadian hubs. In many, if not all,

of these destinations, crossing the border with cannabis or cannabis products remains illegal. There is no way for employees at this retail store to verify this information unless a passenger agrees to disclose it. A passenger would have a different boarding pass for each flight segment. Moreover, we ask that you consider the very real possibility of a domestic flight that would be required to divert to a US airport. In this case, a passenger with legally purchased cannabis would be subject to arrest.

We are also disappointed to see the proponent identify off-duty airport employees as being part of their target customers. At Air Canada, employees engaged in Safety-Critical Work are prohibited from using cannabis and illegal drugs at all times, even when not on duty or in the workplace. While it is the individual responsibility of our employees to ensure they meet this company policy, retailing cannabis and cannabis products at an airport would contribute to the normalization of their consumption and runs counter to a basic safety approach given the significant safety-sensitive work at an airport. Convenience of access, a stated goal of the proponent, should not be a deciding factor in this case. Furthermore, we object to the proposed location next to the Air Canada Operations office inside the terminal.

Lastly, associating a retail store selling a product with known impairment attributes with a critical function for an airline by calling it "Copilot" sends the wrong message and should be rejected by all concerned about air safety.

Finally, we would encourage the City of Prince George to work with the Airport Authority to identify potential retail tenants that would directly support and enhance the travelling public's experience such as food offering, products and services for tourists, and retailers of other travel essentials. As we are certain to see a return to healthier travel patterns as we emerge from the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, pursuing other usage for the limited amount of space available at the airport might be a better strategy.



AIR CANADA

In closing, should Council not be willing to reject the application outright, we respectfully request that a final decision be postponed in order to more fully canvass the implications of having this type of retail business at the airport.

Air Canada would like to thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Kindest regards,