

No Need for Permit to Operate at Santa Monica Airport, JetSuiteX Official Says

Jorge Casuso, Santa Monica Lookout | DEC 22, 2016

JetSuiteX plans to fly low-priced charter flights from Santa Monica Airport with or without a City-issued permit, the company's top official told the Lookout Wednesday.

JetSuiteX CEO Alex Wilcox said the company -- which currently flies small jets at the airport -- would continue to use the facilities of an existing Fixed Base Operator (FBO) for the planned charter service.

The company began selling tickets on the 30-seat charter jets for as low as \$29 on December 14 and plans to start service to destinations that include Las Vegas, San Jose and San Diego County on February 6.

"We'll begin operating whether we get permission or not," Wilcox said. "We can use the existing facilities at the airport."

Wilcox said JetSuiteX would prefer to lease space at the airport and has applied for a Commercial Operator Permit (COP), which is required if the company plans to operate from its own space.

City officials said on Tuesday that they will evaluate the request "in the normal course of business and render a decision based on the totality of the application" ("[JetsuiteX Affordable Flights at Santa Monica Airport Not Yet Approved](#)," December 21, 2016).

Wilcox, however, said the City's decision would have no bearing on JetsuiteX's decision to operate charter flights from the century-old airport.

"We need a COP if we are going to have our own space, but we don't need a COP if we are not a tenant at the airport," he said.

For seven years, JetsuiteX has been flying four and six-seat passenger jets at Santa Monica Airport using the facilities leased by Atlantic Aviation, Wilcox said.

Atlantic was one of two FBOs issued eviction notices by the City in September and is currently fighting the eviction in court ("[Major Santa Monica Airport Tenant Issued Eviction Notice](#)," September 16, 2016 and ("[Santa Monica Decides to Delay Court Fight Over Airport Tenant's Eviction](#)," December 7, 2016).

Wilcox said he is confident Atlantic will prevail and added that the City would have to issue a request for another FBO unless it plans to offer flight services itself.

"We have a federally protected right to operate from this airport without further permission from the city," he said.

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(Highlights, footnotes and minor edits may have been added, but only to add analysis & clarification)