

September 30, 2024

RE: EX17.5 - Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport-Runway End Safety Areas

Dear Mayor Olivia Chow and Executive Committee of City Council:

I am writing as the Chair of the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association (BQNA) and co-chair of the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Air Quality Study, conducted by the University of Toronto.

The Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood (BQN) is a high density, mixed income community along Toronto's western Harbourfront, made up of Toronto Community Housing apartments, Federal Co-ops (one designated for people living with disabilities), private condos and a shelter run by Homes First.

The BQNA's mandate is to help improve the quality of individual and community life in the Bathurst Quay neighbourhood. The BQNA board is made up of representatives from the 14 eligible buildings south of Lakeshore and west of Spadina to Coronation Park. Our role is to act as liaisons for the community at the local, federal and provincial level to governments, business and community groups.

This Friday, October 4, we are celebrating the opening of a brand new City Park, Bathurst Quay Common, next to the re-furbished Canada Malting Silos. This investment provides much needed public and community space on Toronto's waterfront and greatly enhances the riding of Spadina Fort York. We are very proud of our role lobbying for its existence and advising on its development throughout its planning and construction.

In relationship to the RESA decision, an issue that is of key importance to the Bathurst Quay residents is the air quality in the neighbourhood. In 2019 we initiated an air quality study with the University of Toronto's Transportation Research and Air Quality group (TRAQ). We then met with City of Toronto Planning, Public Health and Billy Bishop Airport. A Community Campus partnership was formalized and received NSERC funding. The study's goals were identified as follows:

1. To identify and measure pollutants in the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood and;
2. To disseminate research findings to help inform future planning and policy discussion and decision-making.

The U of T scientists gathered important data on the levels of ultra-fine particles (UFP) in the air around the airport. UFPs have been in the news recently because of a McGill University led study that links 1100 mortality cases in Toronto and Montreal to these incredibly small particles, allowing them to penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream and [increasing evidence suggests these pollutants may contribute to heart and lung diseases, as well as certain forms of cancer.](#)

The University of Toronto team concluded in their direct measurement campaign conducted between 2020 and 2022 that "[Airport activities are the primary source of UFP in the neighborhood.](#)" This was further verified by peer reviews and acceptance at national and international transportation conferences. Findings from the study were also recognized in a [CBC News online article](#) published on September 27, 2024 about the health problems caused by these tiny, unregulated particles.

In particular, researchers found that when aircraft take off and land, high levels of UFPs occur particularly during southerly winds in the summer months (when tourists add to the mix of community residents). Indeed, airport activities contributed 60% of total UFP concentrations measured at the Ferry Terminal (compared to diesel and background levels).

On top of this, [frequent elevated UFP spikes](#), with concentrations up to and over 100,000 particles/cm³ and lasting a few minutes, were observed across the neighbourhood exceeding the World Health Organizations good practice guidelines for High UFPs (set at 20,000 particles/cm³ for 1- hour average and 10,000 particles/cm³ for 24 hours average.) These WHO guidelines were commonly exceeded at the Ferry terminal. At this location nearly 25% of the hours and approximately 80% of the days surpassed the 1-hour and 24-hour good practice, respectively.

As we know, the Ferry Terminal is part of the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood and is located next to a school and playground with nearby tourist spots, residential buildings and a community centre. Because of the airport's dominant contribution to UFP levels in our air, we are as polluted as busy traffic congested parts of downtown Toronto.

We would appreciate if councillors would consider priorities that contribute to the health and well-being of all Toronto residents and visitors to the waterfront and that align with the City's official plan. In making a decision, please listen to this 15 minute video of BQNA community members and Dr Marianne Hatzopoulou, Head of the U of T's Transportation and Air Quality research group, talk about the airports' impact on air quality at this public presentation of the study's key findings in June of this year. <https://youtu.be/HJeGUW860I4>

With the air quality's study's recommendations for further study and research, it is premature to add permanent land-fill to the lake and harbour, when less invasive options, from EMAS to shorter runways, should be considered. Additionally, by exploring all options, we would reduce the rush to make a decision to meet a construction deadline without proper public consultation and further discussion.

Sincerely,



Joan Prowse
Chair, BQNA
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