

October 8, 2024

Via Email: councilmeeting@toronto.ca

City of Toronto City Council
c/o John Elvidge, City Clerk
City of Toronto, City Clerk's Office
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West, West Tower, 12th Floor
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

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

Dear Members of Council,

There have been important questions raised about Runway End Safety Areas (RESA) timelines, options and enablers, and what has been done to progress this initiative over the years.

To be clear, Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport was formally informed by the federal government in July 2023 that, given the passenger counts, the Runway Ends Safety Areas (RESA) would need to be established by July 2027. This federally mandated safety regulation is not optional – it is required by Transport Canada and must be completed by July 12, 2027. Transport Canada has reiterated to the City of Toronto formally and informally that these timelines were not going to change and further that in a letter dated April 12, 2024. "Transport Canada acknowledges that RESA implementation will require changes to the 1983 Tripartite Agreement."

Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport now faces an immovable deadline, and two critical elements of this project remain unresolved.

There are two key enablers required for RESA:

- **A landmass extension** to accommodate the safety areas not a runway extension; and,
- **A term extension of the Tripartite Agreement** to secure the necessary financing for the RESA project.

Without these two enablers, the future of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is at risk. Financial markets will not support long-term infrastructure financing with only 8.5 years left on the Tripartite Agreement. Without an extension, securing financing for the RESA project simply cannot happen. This is not unique to PortsToronto—any major infrastructure project requires certainty in financing, and an extension is the only fiscally responsible way forward.

207 Queens Quay West, Suite 500, Toronto, Ontario, M5J 1A7

Tel/Tél: 416.863.2000 | PortsToronto.com

PortsToronto owns and operates | PortsToronto possède et exploite :

RESA had been discussed for years, which is why PortsToronto ensured that RESA consideration was formally contemplated as part of the 2018 Airport Master Plan, which we believe was prudent given the increasing popularity of the airport.

Our collaboration with City of Toronto and Transport Canada staff intensified over the last two years since PortsToronto requested a formal process from City staff that would ensure timely completion of RESA. This led to the creation of a Working Group in March 2023 and an Executive Steering Committee in January 2024, involving representation from all Tripartite signatories.

Throughout the RESA process, we constantly challenged the working group and steering committee to take a solutions-focused approach to RESA. This approach ensured that this project is not only about meeting minimum safety regulations, but also the contemplation of how best to address the needs of the community that have been articulated during our 55 Community Liaison Committee Meetings, numerous AGMs, planning exercises, many community touchpoints and individual discussions, as well as engagement thorough the formal Environmental Assessment (EA) process.

The Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport RESA process has been done in collaboration with engineering, environmental and other technical experts, including the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), as well as stakeholders, and the community. Ultimately, the EA focused on three main design options for implementing RESA. Each approach was analyzed mindful of the community feedback to further address concerns about noise, environmental impact, and operational efficiency. All of which are addressed responsibly in the RESA Option #3 design.

I want to acknowledge that while we've carefully considered all options studied throughout the expert EA process, we are confident that as a result of the various inputs, that RESA Option # 3 represents the most thoughtful and responsible choice in addressing the needs of the regulations, the airport, and the communities that we serve. PortsToronto is committed to ensuring that our airport operations benefit the immediate local and Toronto-wide community, as well as ensuring provincial, national, and international connectivity.

It's important to emphasize that PortsToronto is not asking the City or taxpayers for financial assistance on RESA. We are a self-sustaining organization, responsible for funding major infrastructure projects across the waterfront throughout the marina, port and at the airport. As discussed at Executive Committee on October 1, 2024, PortsToronto is also currently working with the City and covering some of the costs of infrastructure requests such as dock wall repair in the Bathurst Quay neighbourhood, and the Ship Channel Bridge rehabilitation. These were time-sensitive projects that could not be accommodated within the City's own capital budget in the timely manner required. Like the City of Toronto and other responsible organizations, PortsToronto cannot simply allocate all of its reserves to a single project without compromising our ability to maintain other essential infrastructure throughout the Toronto Harbour. That's why long-term financing is critical, and financial institutions require more than the 8.5 years remaining on the Tripartite Agreement to justify lending on this scale.

Additionally, PortsToronto is governed by the *Canada Marine Act* which restricts access to capital. We need to ensure that there is cash on hand for short term capital investments.

We remain deeply committed to working together with the signatories and stakeholders on a path forward that will benefit the community and the over 2 million passengers annually who choose to use Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport for business, personal, and leisure travel. Beyond our passengers, there are well over 2,000 who work at the airport today, many of them unionized, with more workers who will be hired over the next year to accommodate the new US Customs and Border Protection Preclearance service and facility. Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is an award winning, sustainable airport, which is accessed predominately by transit, cycling, rideshare, taxis, our complementary shuttle, and walking. It is the 9th busiest airport in Canada and 5th busiest connection to the US. and generates \$2.1 billion in economic impact according to external consultant InterVISTAS.

Additionally, Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is the operational base for ORNGE medevac and proudly serves Hope Air, Canada's only national charity offering free travel and accommodations for Canadians in financial need who must access medical care far from home. Access to quality healthcare, especially for Northern and rural communities is critical. As Executive Committee heard during Hope Air's powerful presentation, Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is the only Toronto Airport that Hope Air can fly into and it is a lifeline to those from rural and Northern communities needing life saving health care treatment at Toronto's leading-edge hospitals.

We remain concerned that the Staff Report before Council does not fully acknowledge the fiscal and operational realities of RESA. Instead, it:

- Proposes against extending the Tripartite Agreement beyond 2033 for **any** option, which effectively blocks PortsToronto from securing the necessary financing at no cost to the taxpayer.
- Prematurely recommends RESA Option #1, a basic option which fails to provide any significant community benefits such as noise reduction, environmental enhancements, and a utility road that more effectively facilitates the 3,700 civic service vehicles annually (such as Toronto Water, first response vehicles, garbage trucks) that currently cross the runway to service Island residents.
- Raises the spectre that an Official Plan Amendment may be required if PortsToronto pursues RESA Option #3, planning and legal experts have advised us that it would not be required.

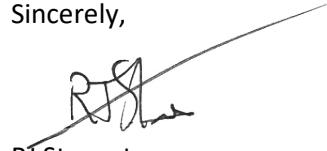
Ultimately, Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport is a vital asset to Toronto's economic and social fabric. It supports tourism, trade, healthcare, and thousands of jobs, and serves as an accessible transportation hub for families, business travelers, and visitors alike. The overwhelming public opinion research by Viewpoints in 2024 states 83% of Torontonians and 83% of Waterfront residents want to see an extension of the Tripartite Agreement. Additionally, we are heartened by the massive outpouring of support for the airport from hundreds and hundreds of Torontonians, businesses, the healthcare sector, BIAs, tourism organizations, the film industry, union partners, as well as the 416 Caucus of the Liberal Party of Canada, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) and Northern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) to name but a few, which underscores the importance of ensuring the future of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

This is about fiscal responsibility and ensuring that Toronto's airport can meet federal safety requirements while continuing to provide economic and social value to the city. Without a term extension, the future of the airport—and the benefits it provides—are in doubt.

We urge Council to support the required RESA enablers as well as to develop the broader process for engagement on the operational and governing agreements for Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport. By working together, PortsToronto, the City of Toronto, and Transport Canada can secure the future of the Airport, ensuring compliance with critical safety requirements while also delivering meaningful benefits to the community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RJ Steenstra', is written over a long, thin, slightly curved line that extends from the left towards the right.

RJ Steenstra
President & CEO, PortsToronto

Cc: Anita Anand, Minister of Transport
Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario