



September 25, 2024

Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Attention: Cathrine Regan

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

Dear Mayor Olivia Chow, Chair, Executive Committee,

FoNTRA represents over 35 Residents Associations in the area bounded by Bloor, Bathurst, Sheppard and the Don Valley Parkway. Like residents across the City, many of our members make use of the various Waterfront attractions, including the many water based activities.

The Port Authority has 2 requests for urgent City Council approval:

1. To approve a RESA option to provide safety areas at the end of runways as required by the Tripartite Agreement that permits the Airport, and
2. To extend the Tripartite Agreement from its current expiry date of 2033 for an additional 20 years to recover costs of building the two RESAs.

1. Request for RESA option approval

FoNTRA recommends that the EMAS option be approved, and if this is not feasible, then RESA Option1 be approved.

- The Transport Canada requirement for EMASs or RESAs at the ends of the runway has been known for a number of years, but no action has been taken until now. The Airport will not be in compliance with the Tripartite Agreement if it does not complete the RESAs by 2027 and therefore cannot continue to operate.
- There are 4 RESA options as well as the option for use of the Engineered Materials Arresting System (EMAS), the least intrusive. If the EMAS option is not an acceptable solution, RESA 1 option, the minimum land mass to meet the regulatory requirement is acceptable.

2. Request to extend the Tripartite Agreement for 20 years (to 2057)

FoNTRA recommends that the request for the 20 year extension of the Tripartite Agreement not be approved at this time, and that further consideration be given to the impacts of this request.

- **Port Authority's failure to plan for EMASs or ARESAs**

A stated rationale for extending the Agreement is that the extension is needed to recoup costs of building the RESAs. However, the project could (and should) have been planned and the cost budgeted for by Toronto Port Authority years ago.

- **Funding for the EMASs or RESAs should not come from the extension of the Tripartite Agreement**

The Port Authority has various sources of funds that could be made available to pay for the chosen RESA option. It is irresponsible to put the burden of the continued use of the Airport on the residents of Toronto when no public benefits result other than the continued airport use. Why should the City agree to extend the Agreement for 20 years, just to rescue the Port Authority from its failure to adequately plan?

- **The Waterfront has changed a lot in 50 years - from industrial to residential, commercial and public uses**

The City and its Waterfront have dramatically transformed since 1973 when the Agreement was signed. At that time the Waterfront was industrial except for the Harbour Castle complex on Queens Quay. Since then, thousands of residential units have been built and occupied, as well as many new features added including parks and walkways, the Martin Goodman Trail, the Music Garden, the Art Gallery, Harbourfront, shopping, etc. as well as the Toronto Island Park. Recreational boating has also increased substantially. As the population of the City and our region grow, there will be increased demand for such uses.

- **The benefits of the Airport have significantly declined**

The opening of the UP Express makes Pearson Airport as accessible or more accessible, than the Billy Bishop Airport.

The environmental impacts of excessive noise and air pollution of a waterfront airport are no longer acceptable, given the new current Waterfront uses noted above.

Around the world, former "City airports" have closed in recent years, such as Chicago, Santa Monica, Edmonton and Hong Kong.

- **Is Billy Bishop Airport financial sustainable?**

Since Porter moved most of its flights to Pearson Airport, the number of flights from the Island have declined substantially, and with it reduced revenue for the Airport and the Toronto Port Authority. What is the financial sustainability of the Airport especially if Porter continues to move more flights to Pearson or another airline moves in?

In addition, a potential move of the helicopter service to a point north of the City centre is considered better suited to their operations would add to the Airport's financial sustainability woes.

3. Consideration of other options for Airport lands

FoNTRA recommends that planning studies be undertaken regarding alternative uses for the Island Airport lands.

- The growing City requires more park space, and consideration must be given to the alternative use of the Airport lands as an extension to the Toronto Island Park as well as residential uses. The existing buildings can be repurposed for other uses.
- The existing Airport pedestrian tunnel and ferry could provide much needed additional access points to Toronto Island.

In summary there are many questions and few answers. Residents should be given a clear picture of all this before a decision is made.

We therefore recommend:

- **that the Toronto Port Authority FoNTRA recommends the EMAS option be approved, and if this is not viable, then RESA 1; (We note that if the Airport cannot meet the 2027 deadline it cannot then continue to operate.)**
- **that the request for extension of the Tripartite Agreement not be approved at this time and that further consideration be given to the issues to be considered and the impacts of this request;**
- **that the 20 year extension to the Tripartite Agreement not be approved at this time and that further study be undertaken of the current state of the Airport, its issues and impacts on the Waterfront; and**
- **that planning studies be undertaken for alternative uses for the Airport lands.**

Respectfully submitted

Geoff Kettel and Cathie Macdonald,
FoNTRA Co Chairs

Cc: City Councillors
Jag Sharma, Deputy City Manager, Development and Growth
David Stonehouse, Director, Waterfront Secretariat
Kyle Knoeck, Interim Chief Planner and Acting Director, City Planning
CORRA, FoSTRA, SUN

The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA) is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of over 30 member organizations. Its members, all residents' associations, include at least 250,000 Toronto residents within their boundaries. The residents' associations that make up FoNTRA believe that Ontario and Toronto can and should achieve better development. Its central issue is not *whether* Toronto will grow, but *how*. FoNTRA believes that sustainable urban regions are characterized by environmental balance, fiscal viability, infrastructure investment and social renewal.