

From: David.Lewis@ecocern.ca
To: [Executive Committee](#)
Subject: [External Sender] My comments for 2024.EX17.5 on October 1, 2024 Executive Committee
Date: September 30, 2024 5:26:07 PM

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the October 1, 2024 Executive Committee meeting on item 2024.EX17.5, Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport - Runway End Safety Areas

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

YQNA Presentation to City of Toronto Executive Committee

By David Lewis, B.Sc., M.E.S.

October 1st, 2024

I have difficulty understanding why City Council feels that it needs to decide on approving or not approving the Billy Bishop RESA since none of the studies have been completed. PortsToronto states that the EA will be completed in early 2025. Why not wait until all the facts are in?

Environmental Assessment

At the CLC 55 meeting held September 18, Warren Askew made the point numerous times that they had not yet decided on which option they wanted for the RESA. Generally, this is not the way Environmental Impact Assessments (EAs) are conducted. Generally, all options are presented and not just the build-out ones.

All the options are held on the table until the EA is completed. The first option to always be considered is the “No Build Option”. We do not know if PortsToronto has considered this option as only the three build options were presented to the public. Deeply researching the “No Build Option” helps to clarify many issues. However, it is not surprising that the “No Build Option” is not on the table or publicly discussed, as the EA Consultant is AECON, which is an engineering consulting and a large construction company. **This is a large “conflict of interest”**. The EA consultant should be an arms-length objective third party that will not be involved in the building of the RESA.

At the completion of the EA, all the options should have been thoroughly researched, costed and put in a priority sequence by the Consultants based on facts. There is a final discussion with the Client (PortsToronto) where there may be some minor changes. This certainly does not seem to be the manner in which PortsToronto has handled this process.

This whole process has been rushed because Ports Toronto believes that putting everyone under pressure will make people overlook various issues and which will help them achieve the

results that they want. PortsToronto is taking an incremental approach. First the RESA, then add multiple new hangers on the south side, then push for better access for emergency vehicles.

RESA was first proposed by Transport Canada in 2010, while the proposed amendments to RESA were published in 2020. In 2021 the final regulations were published to require RESAs. PortsToronto had at least 3 years to bring the public into the discussion. They did nothing publicly until the first “Public Meeting” about RESA on July 17, 2024. Four months, not four years for the Public and Council to review the issues.

If this is a safety issue, why the procrastination by Transport Canada and PortsToronto?

Economic Benefits

When the Tripartite Agreement was signed in 1983, there were few residential condo buildings and very little commercial along the waterfront. It now has a large residential community and a recreational harbour and lake instead of large empty areas of land and water for planes to land and take off.

From my estimates, Harbour Square, (one of the many complexes on the Waterfront) roughly a block in size, has 5 buildings, pays in the order of \$10 to \$12 million in property taxes and has approximately 6,000 people living in those condos.

Villiers Island (The Portland’s) could have higher density if the runway airspace over it was removed. More tax dollars.

Thousands of people visit the Waterfront and the Islands every year. How much do they contribute to the City? What does the Waterfront Business Community contribute to the City?

What are the Economic Benefits of the Island Airport?

PortsToronto always says there are Economic Benefits to the airport but never provides independently verified numbers.

Major considerations for Council

Considering the Climate Crisis and the impending High Speed Rail Service, will we still be flying out of the Island Airport in 5 years, 10 years?

Should Council consider better uses for these 210 acres of prime real estate? It could be our version Central Park.

Should Council be encouraging or discouraging PortsToronto spending millions on a RESA?

Recommendations

If a RESA is to be constructed, we agree with the City Staff report that the Option One is the only one that should be built, and it should have minimal to no disruption or impact on the Toronto Harbour and waterfront communities.

Please recommend that City Council defer any decision about the RESA until Mid-2025 when all studies have been completed, as noted in PortsToronto’s proposed dates.

Also, please recommend that City Staff start a review of the future of the Airport now.