

September 18, 2013

Dear Councilors;

Please consider these comments regarding the evaluation of jets at the Toronto Island Airport (TIA).

As I understand the process, this consultation is regarding two questions:

- Does the increased use of the Island Airport impact, either negatively or positively, the continued revitalization and use of public spaces on the Waterfront and, if so, how and why?
- What conditions should be imposed if City Council decides to permit jets and increase passenger volumes at the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport?

I address both questions. The first is my personal opinion, while the second is my professional opinion.

Question 1: Noise pollution is an underestimated stress that one endures living in cities. By permitting the extension and therefore the jets, the increased use does create additional stress to those who live, work, or use the waterfront as a place of recreation. I fit into all three of those categories. Even within the last seven years I have noticed a significant increase in plane traffic linked to the TIA and it negatively impacts my enjoyment of the waterfront.

Question 2. I preface my comments to this question by providing my background. I study waterbirds (terns, gulls, cormorants) at Tommy Thompson Park and have been engaged in this research since 2006. My concern is not the additional noise that the jets will cause to nesting birds at the park, but rather what may happen if there is a bird strike which results in a plane crash.

Birds hitting airplanes is not uncommon. One of the more recent events (2009) was the US Airways Flight 1549 where a jet hit a flock of Canada Geese and crashed into the Hudson River. So it is not unreasonable to consider bird strikes as a possibility for the TIA. In 2012, there were 11,741 cormorant nests at Tommy Thompson Park. Each nest has two adults and an average of 2.5 chicks. This means in August when those chicks are flying, there are some 53,000 cormorants in and around the Toronto waterfront. This is just cormorants, not gulls, geese etc. I've included a photograph that I took while on Peninsula C, Tommy Thompson Park in August 2011 while a prop plane was flying over.

What I would like the council to consider is what happens to these colonies if there is a bird strike which causes a plane crash? This relates to question #2 because I would request that City Council, if it decides to allow jets, set a condition that NO CULLING WILL OCCUR in the waterbird colonies that exist at Tommy Thompson Park. I would note that quite recently culling was permitted around Kennedy airport in NY<sup>1</sup>, so I would hope that the councilors would think through the very serious problem of bird strikes and all possible outcomes. Surely, we do not want a situation where we are killing local wildlife so jets can fly in and out of the TIA.

Thank you for considering these comments.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/usda-bird-strike-prevention-plan-cull-half-dozen-bird-species-jamaica-bay-article-1.1085167>

