



## Report on the "public information" sessions held by Transport Canada on June 24 and 27, 2013

Some of our members, as well as members of other groups, such as Green Durham Association, purposely worked the room on both evenings, asking the same questions, to glean information and check for consistency in the answers. Those answers were also cross-checked with answers received by two reporters, one from the *Star*.

Here's what we found:

1. Transport Canada still stands behind the conclusions of the *Needs Assessment Study Report* of March 2010. They said that Pickering will be needed once Pearson, Hamilton, and Waterloo reach capacity. They also said that passenger forecasts will need "refreshing" to retest the timing of the need for Pickering, and that this "refreshing" will happen in the next few years – "up to 10 years from now." But they are still thinking big airport.<sup>1</sup>
2. Transport Canada is redoing the federal land zoning regulation, triggered by the transfer of "airport land" to the Rouge National Urban Park, because the current regulation covering the original 18,600 acres is incompatible with a national park. The new regulation will be based on the 8,700 acres shown on the airport boundary map, released on June 11 (see over). The publication date of the new regulation is supposed to be "next summer." They said that proposed runway alignment and approach paths to fit the new footprint will be available then as well, so information on the runway/approaches map currently on Transport Canada's website will change. Until then, there will be uncertainty as to whose property will be under a flight path.
3. Transport Canada hedged when asked if a "jump-start" Buttonville East was possible. They switched to talking Needs Assessment (big airport), and stated that from planning to operational stage is 8-10 years for a big airport.
4. Transport Canada's website commitment was to "engage with the province, regional and local municipalities, business interests and other stakeholders in the region ... on the future of the remaining Pickering Lands. This input will help shape development and management plans for the future of the Pickering Lands, while protecting what is needed for future aviation purposes." However, at the "info" meetings, Transport Canada stated that the consultation was limited to the two public information sessions, plus comments written on the form they provided at the sessions or via their website by the end of July.
5. Transport Canada could *not* have been surprised by the announcement, whatever they said. Jim Flaherty's letter to Glen Murray (who may well have been surprised), and which was featured in Christina Blizzard's column in the *Toronto Sun*, stated that planning for June 11 began in January. What's more, Transport Canada released the announcement on their website (along with new maps dated June 6, 2013) on the very day of the announcement.<sup>2</sup>

### NOTES

1. The forecasts provided by Transport Canada for the Study were inflated. This allowed the report's authors to find that an airport could be needed between 2027 and 2037 – or perhaps later. Even during the three years of the study, *actual* passenger figures were showing the forecasts to be far too high. The GTAA and TC ignored the facts and stuck with the fiction.
2. Former People or Planes members warned us that Transport Canada are past masters of ambiguity or of saying different things to different people. That's what the set-up of their June information meetings enabled them to do. And that's why our questioners were so careful about not being together, and about asking questions multiple times on both nights.

