

February 19, 2016



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GROWING concern!**



SUBMISSION SUPPLEMENT

**To the Independent Advisor
on the Development
of the Pickering Lands**

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Southeast corner of the Federal Lands, looking east towards what remains of the hamlet of Brougham.
Hwy 7 is on the right.

1 What's So Special About *These* Lands?

1.1 Their Unique History

Before focussing on the best future use for the remaining Federal Lands, it's necessary to be aware of their present state and to know how they got that way.

Expropriation

The North Pickering Airport Project required the erasure of all existing civilization from the expropriated area. Property was seized. Owners were forced to accept compensation determined by the government. All buildings had to be vacated. As people departed, structures were demolished. Then, in 1975, the Province intervened, causing the airport project to be put on hold. It has stayed that way for more than four decades.

By the time of the provincial intervention, most people had moved elsewhere to live and earn their living. What remained were a few residents on a huge site, surrounded by empty buildings and untended farmland. The impact of the Project wasn't only swift and brutal on the lives of those expelled from the expropriated lands; it was devastating for the entire area: hundreds of farm and business jobs were lost, as were many more from supporting businesses in the wider area. The massive social and economic upheaval crippled or destroyed local communities.

The subsequent decades

To earn some revenue while the airport project was on indefinite hold, the federal government leased the farmland and buildings to casual tenants. One-year farming leases became the norm, removing incentive (or ability) to repair farm infrastructure, keep livestock, or grow perennial crops. The farm economy was reduced to a minimum number of jobs and minimum-economic-output grain farming, mostly by farmers who "visited" their leased lands to sow and harvest, carrying away the wealth of production from North Pickering farms and spending it in their home communities. Residential tenants came and went. Most were employed outside the area. Few knew their neighbours, fewer still got involved in what remained of the local community.

And for decades, Transport Canada developed policies to prepare the site, over time, by stealth, for a future airport. Deliberate and irresponsible property management caused the expropriated lands to deteriorate into a rural slum, a situation that was then used to justify ongoing demolition of infrastructure. The bringing to light of deplorable housing conditions eventually forced policy changes, requiring the government to maintain remaining residences in acceptable condition. But often, as soon as tenants vacated a property, it was demolished. And residents desperate to get some local jobs back were actively prevented by government policy from making economic redevelopment and infrastructure investments.

The consequences

The remaining Federal Lands today are a local economic (and retail) desert. They are unlike any comparably sized tract of whitebelt/greenbelt (and mostly Class 1) farmland in the GTA urban fringe.

1.2 Their Unique Combination of Characteristics

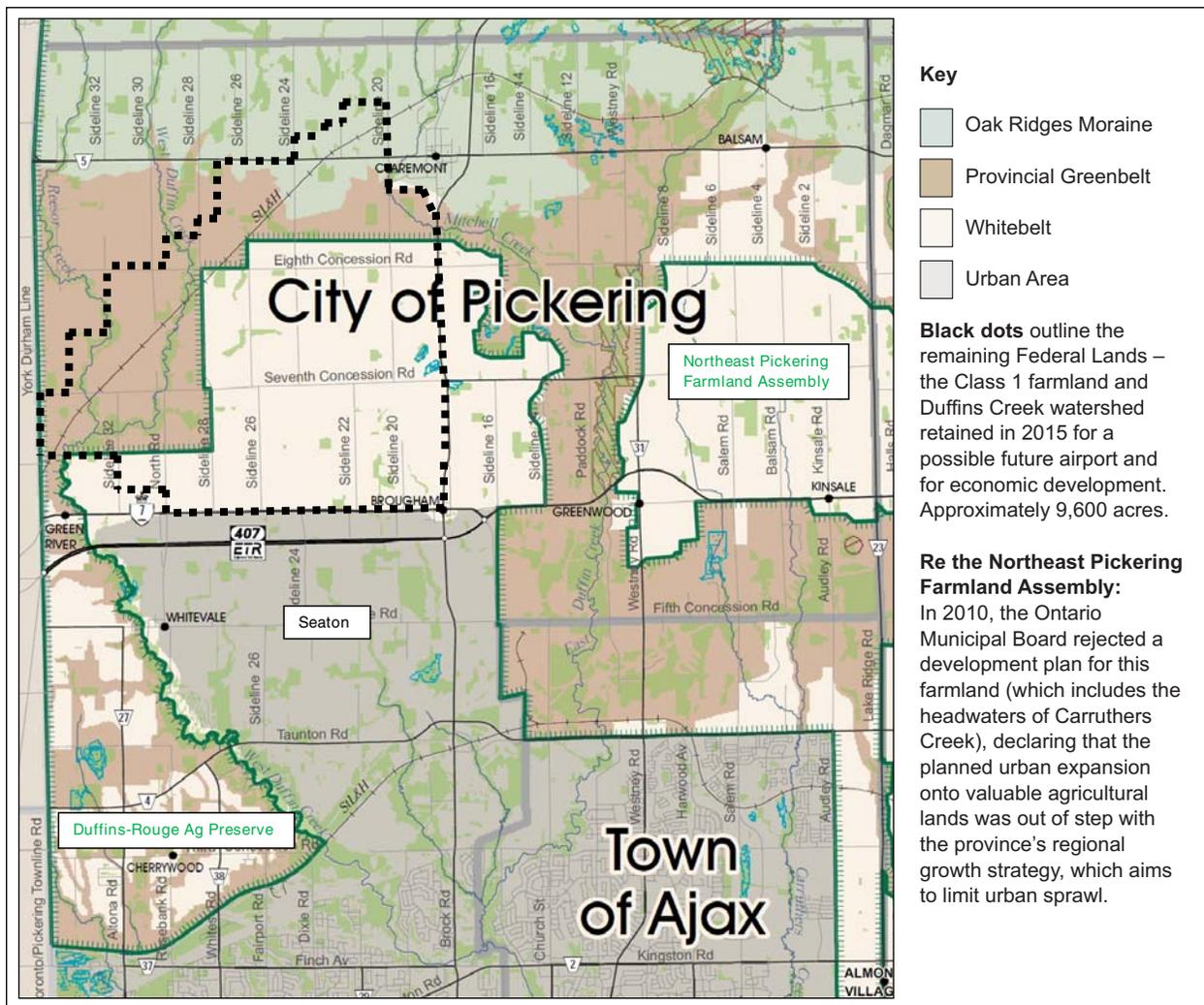
- The remaining site is owned by the federal government on behalf of all Canadians. Its federal status means that it can be permanently protected for agriculture with a stroke of the pen.
- At 9,000+ acres, it is the largest unbroken tract of publicly-owned, *unencumbered*, best-quality farmland in the country.
- It lies adjacent to the Rouge National Urban Park, which has a mandate to promote nature, culture, *and agriculture*.
- It is centrally located within a broader agricultural area. Close to a third of it is in the Provincial Greenbelt and most of the rest of it, being identical farmland, *should* be (see map opposite).
- It is crossed by the Duffins Creek watershed, one of the GTA's cleanest.
- Given its geographic location, rich soil, temperate climate, and regular rainfall, it requires little or no irrigation, except for fruit and vegetable crops nearing harvest.
- The land, almost entirely Class 1 soil, can grow more than 200 different food crops. Bordering on Canada's culturally diverse and largest urban centre, it has a ready-made and growing market, and could help meet the rapidly expanding market for "world foods," most of which must currently be imported.
- Its outstanding characteristics make it a prime candidate for growing specialty crops, joining the Holland Marsh and the Niagara Tender Fruit and Grape Lands, which receive the Province's highest level of agricultural protection. And unlike the Holland Marsh, its higher altitude protects it from flooding.
- It has a rail line running through it, straight to Toronto Union Station.
- Hwy 407, with an interchange adjacent to the Lands, skims the southern border.
- Hwy 401 is just a few kilometres to the south.
- The Port of Oshawa is barely 30 km away.

No other tract of farmland in Ontario – indeed, in Canada – combines the same advantages in one package. Together, these advantages make the Lands the ideal place to develop a successful regional food hub, with all the jobs a hub would generate.

1.3 The Breadth of Opportunity

Expropriation and its aftermath left a deep economic sink-hole in the North Pickering area. But it's this very situation that would generate the unique, two-phase, agricultural economic rebound that is possible here – the "rural renewal" building boom that would take place in and around the remaining Federal Lands if they were permanently protected for agriculture and used to their maximum agricultural capability.

In the estimation of agricultural land use planner Margaret Walton, these Lands, when compared with any other GTA farmland, would come out *top of the list* in terms of future



primary and secondary agricultural jobs and economic growth potential. The chief reason, ironically, is the depth of economic depression into which the area has been allowed to fall.

In other municipalities in the GTA urban fringe, agriculture is under constant pressure from encroaching urban development -- a relentless gnawing at the edges of the land that's there to feed us. Those areas' economic output is in slow decline, whereas, on the remaining Federal Lands, there is a unique and realistic opportunity to *grow* the local agricultural economy into the future – a vital consideration in this century of increasing population numbers and dwindling arable land.

The Lands offer an unparalleled business-growth opportunity for agriculture. Their rich farm soil (southern Ontario's primary natural source of wealth), the watercourses, and the natural habitat, although suffering from neglect, survive intact. Some usable farm, residential, and business infrastructure remains. If these Lands were rezoned as "permanent agricultural" and used to their maximum agricultural capability, coupled with businesses dependent on primary agriculture, they would undergo an economic renaissance unlike any comparably sized tract of farmland in the GTA.

Margaret Walton also explained to us that, while studies such as “Farmland at Risk”^[1] were “generally right” [for the entire Greater Golden Horseshoe (not just for the GTA)], they were “specifically wrong” [for the remaining Federal Lands]: no study specifically shows the *current depth* of economic calamity on the Lands, or the *future promise* of strong growth the local economy would experience if this vast tract became a permanent agricultural zone. The studies fail to include some important business opportunity factors.

No other tract of land in the GGH requires the same “rural renewal” building boom to repair or replace destroyed infrastructure – an essential preliminary step towards making the Lands economically competitive with other tracts of farmland in the GGH. To truly determine the *future potential* of the Lands if used to their *maximum food production capability*, in terms of jobs and wealth from new agriculture and agriculture-related business, a very specific type of study must be undertaken, not only to definitively prove that focussing on agriculture here will create new jobs and new prosperity, but also to provide the framework for that revival.

We are unable to get this study completed within the shortened timeframe of your own study, Dr Polonsky. But support for such a study is growing rapidly and *the study will be done*.

1.4 The Achievability of an Economic Renaissance, Starting Now

Later in this document we will compare various possible options for the future use of the remaining Lands. But we can state here that only one of those options could trigger an economic renaissance *starting now* without permanently harming an important natural asset: the cancellation of the airport plan and the permanent protection of the land for agriculture. Whether the land is placed within the Park or in a land trust adjacent to the Park is immaterial at this point. The very fact of lifting the airport threat and airport zoning would have an *immediate* positive impact on this distressed area, and the benefits would continue to accrue.

- The economic chill and uncertainty in North Pickering would evaporate. Economic development and infrastructure investments would resume on the Lands and in the areas surrounding them. Infectious optimism in the future would resurface in the area and have its own positive effect. Communities would be reinvigorated and begin to return to their former enterprising state.
- The creation of local jobs would start as soon as the new policy was announced.
- There would be an immediate building boom as rundown farmhouses and farm buildings were repaired, and as new infrastructure was built on destroyed “brownfield” sites on the Lands. That infrastructure would include housing, buildings for agricultural uses, and buildings for small, diversified businesses, many or most related to agriculture.
- This single, huge “green sheet,” governed by one landlord, would allow for unmatched flexibility, ensuring varying acreages of leased land to meet the needs of specific agricultural activities and allowing the farmers to earn a decent living.
- Sufficient lease terms/lengths would attract both current and new farmers willing to diversify agricultural production. Grain farming would decrease, and much more value-added fruit, vegetable, and mixed farming – including livestock – would be carried out.
- Created would be hundreds of permanent, full-time and part-time jobs, and these would be multiplied when the secondary agricultural economy is included.

What can't be overstated is the impact of the launch of the Rouge National Urban Park. It has turned all thinking about the future of agriculture in this region of the GTA upside down. For decades, in the urban fringe, farmers have been saying, "I expect I'll be the last to farm this land." Now, farmers in the RNUP are saying, "Someone will always farm this land."

The Park, through its very existence, has created a new dynamic in the area. Its 10,200 acres have become a permanent agricultural anchor, and they offer real hope for future agriculture on the 9,600 acres of remaining Federal Lands. The same applies to a cluster of local (but in separate tracts) farmlands that have also been permanently preserved for agriculture: namely, the 10,000+ acres in the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve and the Northeast Pickering Farmland Assembly – a total of nearly 30,000 acres in Uxbridge, Markham, and Pickering alone. They adjoin or are included in the 45 per cent of Durham Region's land area – nearly all prime farmland – that is in the Provincial Greenbelt. This large cluster of protected farmland, with the Federal Lands at its core, would create unique economic synergies, retaining and attracting a greater diversity of agriculture-related businesses than could the remaining Lands on their own.

We fully expect that a study will prove beyond a doubt that the additional agricultural jobs and economic activity generated by this larger local and regional cluster (once the Lands' economic chill has been removed), will be exponential rather than linear.

Our emphasis is on creating jobs *now* on the remaining Lands, not in 10 or 20 or 40 years' time (if then), jobs that are part of an economic sector – agriculture – that has been continuously active and prosperous in this area for hundreds of years (what other sector can claim this?) and will continue to be so for as long as people need feeding and there is land to farm.

This is a sector with a secure future. Climbing population numbers, the need for local food security, and the need to feed countries with food shortages are becoming global preoccupations. We must start to nurture this sector now, and the first step in doing so is to preserve the basic ingredient the sector needs in order to survive and thrive: prime farmland.

2 The Highest and Best Use

2.1 Growing Support for an Agricultural Study

More and more organizations and individuals are coming forward to support our plan for a study of the economic potential of agriculture on these Lands. At time of writing, they include:

Justin Altmann, Mayor of Stouffville

Carolyn Bennett, Liberal MP for Toronto–St Paul’s, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs

Stephen Bocking, Director, School of the Environment; Professor, Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems, Trent University

Shirley Boxem, Chair, Food and Water First

Maurice Brenner, Ward 1 Pickering City Councillor

Pauline Browes, former Conservative MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, 1986–1989; board member, Rouge Park Alliance

Brian Buckles, Director, Green Durham Association

Wayne Caldwell, Interim Dean, Ontario Agricultural College, University of Guelph

Sandra Campbell, community educator; author of *The Movable Airport*

Michael Chong, Conservative MP, Wellington – Halton Hills

Claremont and District Community Association

A coalition of our former local Conservative MPs, whose efforts led to the July 2015 announcement committing 5,000 more acres of Federal Lands farmland to the RNUP

Carl Cosack, rancher; past-Chair, North Dufferin Agricultural and Community Taskforce (NDACT)

Debbe Crandell, Executive Director, Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition

David Crombie, former Toronto mayor; recent Chair, Ontario’s Coordinated Land Use Planning Review Panel

Glenn De Baeremaeker, Councillor, Scarborough Centre, Deputy Mayor of Toronto (East)

David Donnelly, Donnelly Law; counsel for Environmental Defence

Avia Eek, Holland Marsh farmer; Ward 6 Councillor, King Township; Chair, GTA Agricultural Action Committee; member, York Region Agricultural Liaison Committee

Mary Fragedakis, Toronto City Councillor, Ward 29, Toronto-Danforth; city rep. with Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Alliance

Josh Garfinkel, Senior Campaigner, Earthroots

Donald Gibson, former owner of Bentley-Gibson House, Brougham, expropriated for Pickering Airport; creator of 37-year-old Foodland Ontario advertising campaign

Tim Grey, Executive Director, Environmental Defence

Philip Groff, Executive Director, Sustain Ontario

Rob Hargrave, Councillor, Ward 6, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

Jack Heath, Deputy Mayor of Markham

Darcy Higgins, founder and Executive Director, Food Forward

Mark Holland, Liberal MP for Ajax; Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Democratic Institutions

Janet Horner, Executive Director, Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Alliance

Lisa Kates, Food Forward; co-founder and partner, Building Roots

Mustafa Koç, Professor of Sociology with research interests in food security and food policy, Ryerson University

Karen Landman, School of Environmental Design & Rural Development, University of Guelph

Gail Lawlor, President, Energy Matters (environmental consulting); Vice-President, Durham Sustainability; founding member Durham Environmental Network

Mike Layton, Toronto City Councillor, Ward 19, Trinity-Spadina; rep. on Parks and Environment Subcommittee on Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Stephen Leahy, journalist; co-winner of the 2012 Prince Albert/United Nations Global Prize for reporting on climate change; author of *Your Water Footprint*

Pat Learmonth, Director, Farms at Work

William A. Lishman, Fellow of the Explorers Club and the Royal Canadian Geographic Society

Local farm families, including Reesors, Tapscotts

Burkhard Mausberg, CEO, Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation

Ian McLaurin, Chair, Ontario Soil Regulation Task Force

Joe Mihevc, Toronto City Councillor, Ward 21, St. Paul's West; Chair, Board of Health

Helen Mills, Toronto Green Communities

Don Mitchell, Mayor of Whitby

Faisal Moola, Director General, Ontario and Northern Canada, David Suzuki Foundation

Mitch Morawetz, farmer; municipal land use planner; President, Durham Region Federation of Agriculture

David Morley, international development leader; lecturer, Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto

Phil Mount, Research Associate, Centre for Sustainable Food Systems; Principal Investigator, Project SOIL; Researcher, Nourishing Communities; Associate Editor, *Canadian Food Studies*; Co-Chair, XIV World Congress of Rural Sociology (Toronto 2016)

NDP MPs (former): Malcolm Allen, Dan Harris, Matthew Kellway

Jennifer O'Connell, Liberal MP for Pickering-Uxbridge

Gerri-Lynn O'Connor, Mayor of Uxbridge

Ontario Greenbelt Alliance (117 organizations)

Jane Philpott, Liberal MP for Markham-Stouffville and Minister of Health

Steve Parish, Mayor of Ajax

Tara Pearson, Toronto Youth Food Policy Council

Ricardo Ramirez, Independent Researcher/Consultant; Chair of FarmStart; Adjunct Professor, School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph

Wayne Roberts, food analyst and visiting scholar, University of Toronto; author of *The No-Nonsense Guide to World Food and Food for City Building*

Cookie Roscoe, Manager, "The Stop" and SickKids farmers' markets

Dave Ryan, Mayor of Pickering

Kyla Schwartz-Lam, Communications and Operations, Toronto Youth Food Policy Council

Matt Setzkorn, Executive Director, Ontario Farmland Trust

Erin Shapero, Greenbelt Program Manager, Environmental Defence

Susan Swail, Smart Growth Program Manager, Environmental Defence

Ryan Turnbull, President, Eco-Ethnomics

Margaret Walton, Partner and Senior Planner, Planscape Inc.

Alan Wells, past-Chair, Rouge Park Alliance

Whitevale and District Ratepayers Association

Christie Young, Executive Director, FarmStart



In a finite world whose population continues to increase, there is no jurisdiction which can afford to neglect its global responsibility to the twin goals of food security and protection of farmland from conversion to other uses.

– Charlotte McCallum, *Farmland Requirements for Ontario's Growing Population: 2010 to 2036*, 2011

2.2 The Increasing Value of Our Arable Land

We're not talking about sale value here but intrinsic value to humanity. In a research paper^[2] published during the Paris Climate Change Conference, biologists from Sheffield University pointed out that the world lost *a third of its arable land* to erosion or pollution *in the past 40 years*. Meanwhile, according to the United Nations, the world population grew by 81 per cent in the same timeframe.^[3] This news isn't just sobering. It is devastating.

Mark Reusser, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, brought the issue home in an OFA article^[4] in 2013, warning that significant farmland acreage in the province is lost to residential, commercial, and aggregate encroachment every day, and that "Ontario cannot sustain this level of land loss and continue producing enough food, fibre and fuel." Furthermore:

Our growing population is putting increasing pressure on farmers to produce more on less land. Based on the Ministry of Finance's projections, Ontario's population will grow from 13.5 million in 2012 to 17.4 million in 2036. That's nearly 30% more people in 24 years.

Mr Reusser reminds us that Ontario farmers also feed the world's growing population. "With more mouths to feed and house and clothe, the value of preserving productive farmland should be rising in step with the population."

Our farmland is one of our most valuable assets – not just for food production but also for carbon storage. France has just launched a plan, supported by the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization, to increase soil carbon stocks^[5,6] through, among other practices, composting and no-till farming. These measures preserve topsoil and help keep carbon in the soil, thus helping to mitigate climate change while boosting soil fertility. A win-win plan. Wherever adopted, it will further increase the intrinsic value of arable land.

The plan could be put into practice on a large scale on the Federal Lands – not just on the remaining "airport site" but also within the Rouge National Urban Park. The entire area – and it isn't small – could become part of a significant carbon-sequestration project, an example to the world. Shouldn't we, for all kinds of reasons, be discussing this idea, grasping the opportunity with both hands?

2.3 When We Talk Agriculture, We Mean Business

In 2015, a McMaster study, *Dollars & Sense: Opportunities to Strengthen Southern Ontario's Food System*,^[7] found that the province isn't even close to food self-sufficiency – but could be a lot closer if it preserved and capitalized on its first-rate agricultural assets and rethought its food policies. With our soil and climate we could be producing over half the food we currently import at an annual cost of \$20 billion! The study also reported that:

If local production were expanded to replace even ten percent of the top ten fruit and vegetable imports, the Ontario economy would gain close to [a] quarter of a billion dollars in GDP and 3,400 full-time jobs. (p. 5)

Yes, there are jobs to be had if we could grow this sector. *Dollars & Sense* notes that:

Employment in the overall agri-food sector (agriculture, food and beverage manufacturing, wholesaling and distribution, food services and food retailing)

increased from 658,388 to 767,473 over the 2002 to 2013 period, a 16% increase. This reflects an annual growth rate of 1.4%, which is slightly more than population growth. (p. 39)

Our policies, our eating habits, and our importing practices rob us of jobs, fresh food, and food security. Such observations aren't new. In 2011, Dr Charlotte McCallum, University of Guelph, was writing that "trade to meet domestic supply cannot be relied upon indefinitely. ... The self-sufficiency ratio of Ontario is declining and ... the risk for food insecurity in Ontario is growing."^[8] We could grow jobs while we grow food on the Federal Lands.

2.4 The Urgent Need to Help Young Farmers

Statistics Canada reports that the average age of farmers in Canada is 54.^[9] Many will retire in the next few years. If their own families aren't willing or able to take over the business, the owners' options become limited: either sell to another farmer or (where allowed) often to a land speculator or developer.

StatsCan also reports that, between 1991 and 2011, farms where the oldest operator was under 40 years old declined in number by almost 75 per cent – from 74,159 to 20,299.^[10] There are various reasons for this drop. But here, in and around the Greater Golden Horseshoe, one reason in particular stands out: farms are going for prices that young farmers simply can't afford to pay. And any farm outside the Greenbelt that fails to find a buyer within the farming community will soon be lost to residential housing or the portfolios of land speculators or those looking for a stable investment base but who know nothing about farming.^[11] Whichever the case, young farmers – our hope for the future – will lose out. And so will we.

The remaining Federal Lands offer a unique opportunity to break this destructive pattern and help nurture our next generation of much-needed farmers. While there is plenty of inventory of farmland for lease in southern Ontario, most of it, according to FarmStart, fails to meet the basic needs of young farmers starting out. They require somewhere to live, and

We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future.

– George Bernard Shaw

need farm buildings for their equipment and livestock – the very fundamentals that are unavailable on most of the farmland currently offered for lease; the retired or non-farming owners live in the farmhouse and use some of the farm outbuildings.

Livestock, in particular, require the farmer to live in a farmhouse on the land where the livestock are kept. Living at a distance from the farm is universally considered irresponsible animal husbandry. Despite decades of infrastructure destruction on the Federal Lands, some farm housing and barns remain. They would be suitable for meeting the needs of young farmers starting into the business. For this reason alone, permitting further destruction of houses and farm buildings on the Lands is wrong.

Once dedicated to agriculture and administered either by Parks Canada or by a land trust under federal jurisdiction, useful partnerships could be developed with a number of organizations – FarmStart, Guelph University, Durham College – to help the vision become reality. The Lands could be leased in various acreages for specialized uses, including (but not limited to) incubator farms, farmer training, organic farms, micro-farms, research... Combine the produce of the young and beginning farmers with the anticipated influx of visitors from around the world to the Rouge National Urban Park, and with the culinary skills of local chefs and Durham College students and graduates, and you get just a hint of the possibilities for these Lands. The eastern reaches of the GTA would be transformed.

3 The Fallacy of the “Potential Future Airport”

3.1 A Full-Scale Commercial Airport?

On November 16, 2015, the *Guardian* reported having seen a leaked European Parliament study revealing that, without policy change, the aviation industry will account for approximately 22 per cent of global CO₂ emissions by 2050. Currently, emission numbers are reported to be between 2 and 5 per cent. By 2050, maritime shipping and civil aviation together will account for 39 per cent of such emissions if present trends remain unchecked.^[12]

While a researcher for the International Council on Clean Transportation^[13] thinks there’s “a large and underestimated potential for in-sector CO₂ emission reductions,” the question is whether those reductions will happen – or happen in time – without government intervention.

Neither the shipping nor the aviation industry is currently obliged by law to cut CO₂ output. Aviation and shipping were dropped from the Kyoto Protocol.^[14] Aviation has, after strong pressure from various quarters, been excluded from the European Union’s Emissions Trading System.^[15] And although the regulatory body – the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) – was described as aiming for “carbon neutral growth” by 2020, the prospects for success are said to be slim to non-existent.^[14] Self-regulation has an abysmal track record. Meanwhile, “demand driven emissions,” as the industry likes to call them,^[16] continue to climb.

The International Air Transport Association’s 2011 report, *IATA Vision 2050*,^[17] mentioned greenhouse gases and climate change only twice each in 77 pages. All the references were upbeat and of the “problem solved” variety. The first mention of climate change noted that “air travel is much more fuel efficient, and each person flying today contributes much less to climate change than a passenger flying 40 years ago.” (p. 10) While conceding that CO₂ levels were nonetheless rising, since far more people were flying, the IATA didn’t seem to feel that the issue required further discussion in the report.

The second reference to climate change is shockingly complacent in light of what was known by then. It is the closing statement in a lengthy “thought piece” characterized as an “optimistic view of the consumer of the future” [i.e., of 2050]. No pessimistic or realistic view was offered as a counterweight. An excerpt:

Ethical consumerism continues to be a growing trend. Once upon a time, environmental concerns had an increasing influence over consumer choices. Whilst aviation’s contribution to climate change has largely been addressed, this kind of ethical consumerism was the start of the trend that now focuses on such issues as the preservation of local cultures and livelihoods. In addition, with widespread economic development across the planet the definition of ‘rights’ has been expanded to include things like annual vacations and minimum lifestyle standards. (p. 63)

The report’s foreword states: “We must challenge governments to join us in change. This means replacing interventionist micro-management and punitive taxation as the modus

operandi of many, with a positive approach based on a level playing field and focused on commercial freedoms.” (p. iii) To paraphrase, give us less legislation and fewer restrictions, allow us unfettered growth, and otherwise leave us alone. That position isn’t about change. It’s about more of the same but with less oversight. It prompts the kind of optimistic aviation growth projections we see everywhere. Optimism and a sense of self-preservation aren’t necessarily bad, and are commonly found – even encouraged – in business models. However, the aviation industry is not a benign or minor presence on our planet; it’s causing harm to our atmosphere and has the potential to do greater – perhaps irreversible – harm if left unchecked.

Yet at a conference in Switzerland in the spring of 2012, the Air Travel Action Group (ATAG), including IATA, called for market-based measures that “should not be designed or used to ... suppress demand for air travel.” The industry’s belief was that “a simple carbon-offsetting scheme” would be the quickest and easiest way to go.^[18] But carbon offsets alone will not stop our planet’s warming trend. And buying peace of mind with no guarantee that the carbon emissions will, in fact, be offset, just pushes the problem into the future while doing nothing to change consumer or industry habits.^[19] It’s business as usual behind a green mask.

“Growth” appears 68 times in the 60 pages of the IATA’s annual review for 2013.^[20] Eight of those references are to carbon-neutral growth. (“Climate change” appears once, “greenhouse gas emissions” not at all.) The review includes the industry’s four-pillar strategy on

There is no indication that commercial aircraft powered by solar panels, batteries, biofuels, or hydrogen can be expected any time soon. In terms of efficiency, it appears that improvements in current aircraft technology have nearly reached their limit, and further significant fuel-efficiency gains will only come from the development of radically new airplane designs and systems. The time, cost and coordinated effort it would take to develop and test such designs and then phase them into the world's fleets of aircraft make this unlikely to happen any time soon ...the small, incremental gains that we can reasonably expect in aircraft fuel efficiency will be eclipsed by the projected growth in the industry.

– David Suzuki Foundation, <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/issues/climate-change/>

climate change, noting, with regard to the first pillar, that the IATA campaigned – successfully – against the EU’s European Emissions Trading System, demanding a global, instead of a European, solution. (In the near term, what are the chances of that?) The second pillar could reasonably be described as magical thinking: “Technology innovations offer almost unlimited potential and will be the long-term solution. There is no telling what technologies might be on offer in the future.” The third states that “A policy framework that promotes biofuel usage is absolutely essential,” even though no biofuel is yet being produced in anything close to commercial volumes, and biofuel feedstock often comes from fields diverted from food production, a practice that most governments now recognize as wrong. The fourth pillar refers to operational savings, whose

potential the report claims to be considerable, even while admitting that many of these practices are *already* in place around the world. (p. 37) So where will future gains be found?

In the IATA’s annual review for 2015,^[21] “climate change” figures 5 times but the references are opaque. “Sustainability” shows up, but means keeping the industry healthy. There is evidence of growing awareness of the global crisis we all face, but it is muted – at least in the report. While industry progress *is* being made, it’s clearly not keeping up with scientists’ latest findings, which indicate that the dangerous warming up of our planet is occurring as predicted, but much faster than anyone expected.

When 196 countries gathered in Paris in December 2015 to agree on ways to mitigate climate change – one of the gravest threats to survival that the human race has ever faced –

civil aviation and maritime shipping were initially on the table. In the final agreement, they were conspicuous by their absence.^[22] These industries emit more carbon dioxide than most countries do, and their emission rates continue to climb. In our November submission we asked: Will aviation be too important to restrict, even if it jeopardizes our future survival? Just three months later, the question is even more relevant, and action is even more urgent.

We know that getting global agreement to curb and regulate aircraft emissions will be a monumental challenge. Business, trade, and tourism are all involved and critical in varying degrees to every country on the planet. But without active intervention by governments everywhere, how will aviation, growing and polluting at the rate it is, become carbon-neutral in four years' time? And how, by 2050, will it cut its carbon emissions to 50 per cent relative to 2005? And will that be enough? Or too late? According to ATAG, air travel's CO₂ emissions in 2012 stood at 689 million metric tonnes.^[23] The *Guardian's* November 2015 article stated: "Globally, aircraft emitted about 700m metric tonnes of CO₂ in 2013, and without policy intervention that figure is expected to triple by 2050." If government fails to intervene, all other mitigation efforts could turn out to have been for nothing.

It's evident that aviation must soon, one way or another, chart a different course from the current one of constant growth. Whatever that course turns out to be, it's impossible to see a Pickering international airport on it.

3.2 Or Just a Small General Aviation Airport?

In the most recent Transport Canada study^[24] looking into date-of-need for a commercial airport at Pickering, the authors (the GTAA) waffled, selected a "most likely" period (2027–2037), then admitted that the date could also be 2041 or sometime later or "if and when required" – and this was leaving climate change out of the equation. Put it in and there's no assurance that such an airport would ever be considered, given the cutbacks, restrictions, and alternative solutions we trust the world will soon be implementing in every field of endeavour.

But what about "just a small general aviation airport"?

Climate change is going to change everything and we can't pretend it won't. Radically new thinking will have to be applied to whatever we contemplate doing, not least the building of an airport – even "just a small airport" – on the remaining Federal Lands.

Q: Is a Pickering corporate jet / general aviation (CJ/GA) airport *essential* to the area's or the GTA's present and future economic health?

A: Absolutely not.

Q: Would such an airport help reduce carbon emissions?

A: No. It would help increase them by encouraging more flying.

Q: Are there good alternatives to building a new CJ/GA airport?

A: Plenty. Skype, video conferencing, trains, Oshawa Airport (just 20 km east of the site), Hamilton Airport (just 20 km further than Oshawa from downtown Toronto), airports at Waterloo, Burlington, Markham, Muskoka, Simcoe, Peterborough....

A new CJ/GA airport is *not* an innocuous compromise. More a placeholder. The GTAA's 2004 *Pickering Airport Draft Plan Report* promoted the construction of facilities sufficient to enable a corporate jet / general aviation airport that could be expanded over the next two decades to become the major international airport originally intended. Transport Canada's unwavering eye remains on that bigger "prize." Getting the go-ahead for just a small airport would be seen by proponents as a big win after the decades of losses. *But this isn't a game.*

Existing airports are able to handle today's CJ/GA traffic, and some are expanding to handle more. No one knows for sure whether the future we're heading into will see growth or a major decline in that traffic. But we can make educated guesses. Adding an unnecessary CJ/GA airport now would be wasteful and imprudent – applying to a non-problem a yesterday's solution, complete with a significant carbon footprint; air, noise, water, and soil pollution; permanent farmland destruction; and the loss of a one-time opportunity to do something farsseeing and altruistic with a resource whose highest and best use is, indisputably, food production for our country's most populous region.

Building such an airport – especially on prime farmland – would be grossly irresponsible in today's world, a thumbing of the nose at efforts to increase food security and to lower Canada's GHG emissions. We already know that slowing or curbing our emissions won't be nearly enough; we must significantly *reduce* them, even as our population grows. And we must do this not only to have a hope of meeting our international pledge at the Paris Climate Change Conference, but also to have a hope of leaving our children a halfway livable world. The cost of failing would be just too great.

3.3 A High-Speed/Low-Carbon Option

With countries throughout the world beginning to recognise that promises are no longer enough and that all must act and deliver measurable, permanent, global CO₂ emission reductions, it's inevitable that the civil aviation industry's increasingly massive carbon footprint will become a major target.

Growth curbs (such as market-based measures to reduce the frequency of discretionary leisure air travel) and more investment in much lighter carbon-footprint alternative modes of transportation (such as high-speed rail to reduce short-haul flights) are not beyond the realm of possibility:

“...In Europe and increasingly in Asia, such intercity travel is very much the business of high-speed electric rail, not cars or even planes ... In 2007, Madrid-Barcelona was the busiest air route in the world, with 971 flights a week. Shortly after construction of a [high-speed] rail link between the two cities, more than half those flights disappeared, and discounters began selling seats for as little as \$10. Most travellers now choose rail, at about \$200 for a one-way ticket. A trip that once took drivers six hours can now be accomplished in two and a half...”^[25]

The Toronto-Montreal distance is equivalent to Madrid-Barcelona, and the cited fare is comparable to VIA Rail's regular business class. Yet the GTAA's *Needs Assessment Study* cited a (then) 15-year-old study, downplaying the high-speed rail option: “...the ridership assumptions made in the 1995 high speed rail study imply that the impact on overall air traffic demand would be fairly modest...” (ch. 3, p. 8). Environmental considerations weren't discussed.

Twenty years later, how do Canadian transportation experts know that Spain's recent high-speed rail success won't have similar success today, in a Canada determined to curb its carbon emissions? Ontario's transportation planners are currently working on a project to build a high-speed rail service west of Toronto. Why not east? Spain's results indicate that it's possible for a high-speed rail service to eliminate a significant volume of Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal air-shuttle traffic, slowing central Canada's air passenger growth.

3.4 What Has This Airport Blunder Cost Us?

Costs began to be incurred long before the airport was announced, and they continue to be incurred today. An upcoming Transport Canada study will require further significant expenditures. Over the *half-century*, Canadian tax money has gone to pay for:

- the many site searches and consultants' studies and reports, from 1968 to 1972, that resulted in the selection of North Pickering as the location of a new international airport
- the expropriation of 18,600 acres (farmland, natural habitat, and two villages)
- the post-decision studies, hearings, and inquiries, in the 1970s, including:



- environmental studies/assessments
- the Swackhamer Hearing (1972)
- the Gibson Inquiry (1973)
- wildlife studies
- weather studies
- water monitoring studies
- cultural and heritage studies, such as the Draper (Wendat) site excavation, and the massive “Architectural Evaluation of the North Pickering Project and the Toronto Area Airports Project Sites” (1974)

- renovation, furnishing, and maintenance of government site offices on the Lands
- demolition of hundreds of structures – houses, barns, commercial buildings, and outbuildings – over a period of 41 years
- the study by the Pickering Airport Lands Revitalization Committee (PARC) (1985-6)
- 44 years of government administration of the Lands, including the salaries and benefits of an unknown number of Transport Canada and Public Works Canada staff, and the fees paid to SNC-Lavalin Property Management and other sub-contractors
- the consequences of Transport Canada's policies of intentional neglect as landlord (Ottawa has foregone millions in revenue through the department's refusal to re-rent vacated houses; financial records obtained by the *National Post* from Transport Canada showed that environmental, green space, regular, and other operating/maintenance costs – no details provided, and overhead excluded – exceeded rental income by close to \$26 million for 1999–2005 alone)^[26]
- 41 years of inspections of leased properties and of the rehousing or eviction of tenants
- 41 years of maintenance, including 3 decades'-worth grudgingly and shoddily performed by Public Works Canada or their sub-contractors on leased properties on the Lands
- the federal government's legal costs to fight tenants who took Public Works Canada (Transport Canada's property manager until 2005) to court over shoddy practices and

<i>MONEY-LOSING LANDLORD</i>			
<i>Ottawa's income and spending on "Federal Pickering lands"</i>			
<i>Fiscal Year*</i>	<i>Rental Income**</i>	<i>Operating, Maintenance, and Capital Costs**</i>	<i>Net Loss**</i>
1999 / 2000	\$3,944,700	\$7,129,800	\$3,185,100
2000 / 2001	\$4,096,000	\$6,424,000	\$2,328,000
2001 / 2002	\$4,223,500	\$7,513,500	\$3,290,000
2002 / 2003	\$3,874,500	\$9,494,900	\$5,620,400
2003 / 2004	\$3,854,500	\$9,509,700	\$5,655,200
2004 / 2005	\$3,571,200	\$9,277,500	\$5,706,300

* April 1 to March 31 **No overhead costs are included in these totals

National Post article, "Ottawa Losing Millions on Pickering Lands." Data source Transport Canada.

fabricating reasons for eviction, and the resulting costs when the courts sided with the tenants

- 4 decades of funding security patrols on the Lands
- Transport Minister David Collenette's Federal Green Space Preserve initiative, including several roundtable meetings with "stakeholders" and a significant consultant's report^[27]
- the "technical" study commissioned by Transport Canada in 2001 from the GTAA, resulting in the *Pickering Airport Draft Plan Report* (2004) and a related *Financial Assessment Analysis* by consultants Landrum & Brown and ArupNAPA
- the needs assessment study commissioned in 2007 from the GTAA by Transport Canada, resulting in the *Needs Assessment Study / Pickering Lands, Final Report* (2010)
- the Independent Advisor's present study of the Lands' economic development potential, commissioned in 2015
- all other related costs incurred (and ongoing) for Lands-related studies, land surveys, and activities of which the public is unaware

Add to this Transport Canada's upcoming study, a "Pickering Lands Aviation Sector Analysis," involving the hiring of a senior project manager, a senior evaluation services consultant, three senior subject matter experts, and who knows who else, with a completion date of August 31, 2017, for the "proposed initial period." And after that?

Will the latest studies result in change, or will they be shelved as have so many others before them? Will the drain on the public purse ever be stopped? Will Transport Canada's dead hand on Pickering's economy and prospects ever be lifted? The 2010 *Needs Assessment Study* suggested that since a Pickering airport *could* be needed in 15, 25, or 31 years, or at some unknown time after that, the government should go on administering the Lands. Translation: taxpayers should go on paying the bill for however long it takes.

We will likely never know how many millions – or, more likely, billions – of taxpayers' dollars this boondoggle* has cost us, and it's not over yet.

Compare with:

- the cost to the federal treasury of administering the Federal Lands prior to 1972? **Zero.**
- the cost to the federal treasury if the Pickering site had never been expropriated? **Zero.**

* boondoggle: a wasteful or pointless project that gives the appearance of having value

3.5 Weighing Opportunity Costs

Of the possible options under discussion as future uses for the remaining Lands, we list here the most likely ones, and weigh their opportunity costs.

Opportunity #1

Reserve part of the remaining Lands for a potential future airport

Characteristics: Eventual major international airport, including aviation support facilities and services, parking lots, hangars, aviation fuel farms, warehouses, hotels/motels, airport retail and fast food outlets. Perhaps some farming on the periphery.

Advantages:

- “Promises” creation of thousands of local jobs.
- “Promises” relief of traffic congestion at Pearson at future date.
- Allows continuation of farming on the Lands, at least in part and in the short term.

Disadvantages:

- Most advantages are “potential”; no business case for airport in foreseeable future.
- Singularly unknowable future may constrain air travel, kill plans for any new airports.
- Perpetuates uncertainty, further eroding local community and chilling investment.
- Grain farming would continue, low contribution of jobs or value to local economy.
- Would eventually destroy 1000s of acres of foodland, eliminating a local food source area for the GTA.
- Would add huge carbon footprint and air/noise/water/light pollution to rural area.
- Would be unwelcome neighbour for live/work/play model town of Seaton and for RNUP.

Opportunity costs:

- *Foregone:* Immediate job creation.
- *Foregone:* Immediate economic investment.
- *Foregone:* Near-term economic boom capitalizing on current depressed situation.
- *Foregone:* Longer-term economic benefits to be had from capitalizing on (a) site’s natural assets (prime farmland, wildlife habitat) within GTA’s top agricultural region and (b) RNUP-related tourism.
- *Foregone:* All the advantages of Opportunity #5.
- *Lost:* Irreplaceable prime farmland and surrounding natural habitat, together with their carbon-sequestration capabilities.
- *Put at risk:* Atlantic salmon spawning grounds.

Opportunity #2

Use part or all of the land for future urban development

Characteristics: Typical suburban infrastructure – commercial, industrial, retail, possibly residential buildings – covers the landscape.

Advantages:

- “Promises” creation of thousands of local jobs.
- Preserves some farmland, at least in part and in the short term.

Disadvantages:

- Opportunity is “potential”: contravenes provincial land-use/growth policies. Breaks faith with public: a new suburb is not the “public work” that justified expropriation.
- No immediate jobs.
- Dependent on availability of urban services; would be upstart competitor of undeveloped (and cheaper-to-service) provincial Seaton project to immediate south.

- Increased carbon footprint; more commuter traffic; definitive example of sprawl.
- Continuation of mostly grain farming on the periphery: low contribution of jobs or value to local economy.
- Would eventually destroy 1000s of acres of foodland, eliminating a local food source area for the GTA.

Opportunity costs:

- Same as Opportunity #1.

Opportunity #3

Use some land now for a Buttonville replacement

Characteristics: Typical corporate jet / general aviation airport facilities: runways, terminal, hangars, aviation support facilities, parking lots. Farming on periphery.

Advantages:

- “Promises” some jobs in near term.
- Preserves some farmland and natural habitat.
- Offers little negative impact on local rural communities (unless flying schools included).

Disadvantages:

- Most advantages are “potential”: contravenes provincial land-use policies for prime agricultural land. Breaks faith with public: a CJ/GA airport is not the “public work” that justified expropriation.
- No immediate jobs and few new jobs after construction phase (Buttonville employees would transfer to new airport).
- Harmful to Oshawa Airport; perhaps fatal to Markham Airport (so employment loss).
- Grain farming would continue on the periphery, meaning few jobs, little value added to local economy.
- Recreational and corporate jet traffic no direct benefit to local middle-class communities.
- Suspicion that GA airport first step to major airport would perpetuate community erosion.
- Perpetuation of status quo on Lands: few tenants or jobs, little infrastructure, no hope of improvement.
- Increased carbon footprint; new air/noise/water/light pollution in rural area.
- Would destroy 100s of acres of foodland, eliminating a local food source area for the GTA.

Opportunity costs:

- Same as Opportunity #1, plus less chance of significant near-term job creation.

Opportunity #4

Maintain current policies and land use into the future

Characteristics: Farmland mostly cash-cropped, few residents on Lands, deteriorating properties.

Advantages:

- Preserves farmland, natural habitat, and remaining community.
- Provides tenant housing.
- Is less destructive than Opportunities 1-3 (no airport of any kind, no urban development)
- Is unintrusive neighbour for RNUP.

Disadvantages:

- No jobs now.
- Continued drain on federal coffers.
- Continuation of mostly grain farming: low contribution of jobs or value to local economy.

- Perpetuation of expropriation’s impacts, which largely wiped out community.
- Perpetuation of “aftermath of a war zone” status: few residents or jobs, communities crippled or decimated, most infrastructure destroyed, restrictive 1-year farm leases preventing realization of economic potential.
- Normal economic activity on Lands continues to be suppressed by government policies.

Opportunity costs:

- *Foregone:* Immediate and long-term job creation.
- *Foregone:* Immediate rebuilding of local community; near-term economic investment.
- *Foregone:* Near-term economic boom and longer-term economic benefits to be had from capitalizing on (a) site’s natural assets (prime farmland, wildlife habitat) within GTA’s top agricultural region and (b) RNUP-related tourism.

Opportunity #5

Use remaining Lands to their maximum agricultural capability

Characteristics: Agricultural land, watersheds, natural habitat permanently protected. Farmland undergoes maintenance and improvements to infrastructure, soil health, and drainage (to prevent soil erosion). Progressive lease terms/lengths attract current/new farmers willing to diversify agricultural production.

Advantages:

- Creates jobs *now* (requires only a federal decision/announcement and the easing/elimination of certain restrictions, such as the primary economic drag – one year leases).
- Triggers infrastructure investments in surrounding area with the lifting of economic chill caused by airport uncertainty. Communities reinvigorated.
- Creates immediate economic boom, as necessary infrastructure repair and construction undertaken.
- Triggers rebuilding of “brownfield” sites for housing, agricultural use, small diversified (often agriculture-related) businesses.
- Causes secondary economic boom as area revives and transitions to diversified farming and development of a regional food hub.
- Creates (gradually) hundreds of varied and permanent full-time/part-time jobs, multiplied when secondary economy included.
- Huge “green sheet” allows flexibility, ensures viable acreages of leased land for specific agricultural activities so farmers can earn decent living.
- Causes grain farming to decrease; fruit, vegetable, mixed farming – including livestock – to increase.
- Allows farmland to be used to its maximum capability for food production; will enhance future food security for the GTA and produce food for export, while sequestering carbon.
- Will protect and allow maintenance of watersheds, wildlife, and natural habitat.
- Is ideal partner and unintrusive neighbour for RNUP, Seaton, local hamlets.

Disadvantages:

- None that those who call this area home can think of.

Opportunity costs:

- *Foregone:* A “potential future airport” and its many potential jobs (“when” and “for how long” unknown).
- *Foregone:* A CJ/GA airport and its small number of jobs (“when” and “for how long” unknown).
- *Foregone:* Secondary economic benefits of those airports (“what,” “when,” and “for how long” unknown).

Conclusion

If the decision on the future of the remaining Federal Lands aims to accord with the best interests of the community, then Opportunity #5 wins hands down, and for the following reasons:

- a) It takes population growth *and* climate change into account.
- b) It offers immediate and varied middle-class jobs.
- c) It ensures that most income will go into middle-class pockets and be spent locally.
- d) It preserves prime farmland that has been productive for centuries and will continue to be so, far into the future.
- e) It focusses on health and wellbeing. The Lands are a renewable natural resource, able to provide clean drinking water and fresh local food to the GTA for generations.
- f) It offers an affordable opportunity for young farmers – who are essential to everyone’s future – to get started in the business of farming and food production.
- g) It is the best way of righting the wrong that was done to this community in 1972. The federal government used its expropriation powers for the purposes of a “public work” – for the use of, and to benefit, the general public. Opportunity #5 does this more so even than the public work originally planned. Not everyone flies. But everyone needs to eat and everyone benefits from fresh food.

4 Response to APBOT's Policy Position

We were greatly concerned when we read the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade's "Policy Position Summary, Pickering Federal Lands, November 2015." Many of the statements in this summary of APBOT's submission to the Independent Advisor call for clarification or correction. The full text is reproduced below, with our comments in red.

As the voice of business in Ajax and Pickering, it is our view that the plan to set aside 10200 acres for the Rouge Urban National Park, 9,600 acres for economic development, including a potential future airport in Pickering is the right way forward. In our view, this approach balances the need to protect our green space and natural environment with the need to position the Eastern GTA for growth and prosperity. [It's important to note that APBOT neither includes nor speaks for the agricultural industry – a major contributor to our local economy.]

It has been 42 years since the federal government of the day recognized the need to designate lands to meet future needs for an airport in the Greater Toronto Area and it is time to move forward with a transparent plan. [Actually, it was almost 44 years ago, and the federal government of the day was planning to build an airport *immediately*, with an anticipated opening date of 1979.^[28] There was no intention at the time of setting aside land against some future need.]

The Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade is well aware of the airport file, the vast potential it holds for the local area and broader Ontario economies, and the pressures that will soon be upon Pearson Toronto. [There is no guarantee of "vast potential." Hamilton's airport has been a civil airport since the 1960s and Waterloo's has been a regional airport since 1973. Their respective histories are chequered and both airports continue to struggle for want of carriers. As for Pearson, its capacity limit is unknown. Its 2008 Master Plan gave an upper limit of 54 million passengers annually.^[29] In December, 2015, a *Star* interview with the GTAA's CEO quoted a new upper limit of 75 million.^[30] But as our earlier submission pointed out (pp. 8, 39), the number of take-offs and landings that can be safely handled constitutes the chief delimiter. Pearson's aircraft movements have increased by only 2 per cent in the past 14 years. So to say that Pearson will "soon" be under pressure is incorrect.

If the projected passenger growth occurs, Pearson will eventually require *terminal building* expansion, which would be accommodated on the existing site. Pearson is not under pressure for *runway expansion* beyond the capacity of its current site (in other words, needing more land or a new airport). The current forecast is that a planned 6th runway will be built in the 2030s. Only at that point would Pearson be starting to face a real upper-limit capacity issue. And this projection assumes perpetual strong growth in air travel, while ignoring the potential impact of climate-change mitigation efforts in the coming decades.]

It has been a recurring topic of discussion and focus for many years now and, as such, we are well positioned to suggest that the time has come for a final decision on the airport. In fact, we recently created the Ajax Pickering Board of Trade Federal Lands Economic Development Task Force to provide a structure to work with Dr. Polonsky and to participate fully as a stakeholder in this consultative process.

We believe that, given the history and information available to us, it is in the best interests of our communities, province and country for the Federal Government to move ahead with an airport. [No it is not. By all accounts, the civil aviation sector – the sector that makes or breaks airports – isn't interested in a Pickering airport. (And while some members of the general aviation sector would like a little GA airport in Pickering, the CJ/GA sector doesn't need it.) An unwanted or unneeded commercial airport will fail. Ajax and Pickering residents don't need a failed airport in their midst – or its costs on their tax bill.]

Please consider:

- The lands have been set aside for 42 years for the purpose of constructing an airport that brings relief for other airports and addresses growing demand. [The statement misrepresents the site's history and ignores the facts: Pearson is nowhere near capacity, while Hamilton and Waterloo airports are both significantly underutilized. Waterloo has had to be subsidized by local taxpayers to remain viable.]
- Nowhere else in the GTA is a similar parcel of land set aside, nor have there been the years of studies and other pre-build work. [True, but these aren't reasons to build an airport. At a very minimum, need and likelihood of success have got to be among the chief determinants.]
- In a presentation to the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade's Government Relations Committee on February 6, 2015, officials with the GTAA shared that Toronto Pearson will be at or near capacity by 2030. [This information is now out of date. The GTAA's director of airport planning told the *Globe and Mail* in October 2015^[31] that Pearson can still add a sixth runway and may not need to do so "for at least another two decades because airlines are using larger planes and have increased the number of seats they have on all sizes of planes." So that brings us to 2035 or later, with a sixth Pearson runway just opening for business. Furthermore, APBOT's statement concentrates on growth in passenger numbers while ignoring the mere 2 per cent increase in take-offs and landings since 2000. It also fails to consider that for major greenhouse gas emitters, business in the coming decades will, of necessity, be very different from business today.]
- Given that it takes 12 to 15 years to build an airport, work needs to begin immediately so that proper planning can be done to realize an airport that is sustainable and built in the best interests of local residents and the neighbouring municipalities. [Based on real-life examples, a commercial airport can, on average, be operational in 7-8 years. Mirabel's ambitious phase 1 took only 7 years, and that *included* expropriation and planning. Pickering's 1970s construction was expected to be just as snappy – 7 years, including expropriation and planning.^[28] APBOT's implied eagerness to destroy productive farmland before inescapably necessary is profoundly disturbing. The world's attention is shifting to issues such as GHG emissions and food security. Starting construction of an unneeded airport in that context, and when the date-of-need for a reliever airport is unknown even to Pearson's administration (and the need may never arise), would be fiscally, environmentally, and socially irresponsible.]

- For its part, The Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade has surveyed its membership twice over the past four years and on both occasions has found support for an airport and the benefits it will bring to our communities. In addition, our diversified regional business base means we have the local expertise needed for the construction phase of the airport and are well-positioned to support the many start-ups and new national, international and other supply-chain businesses that will be needed to support the ongoing operations. [How was the survey worded? How informed were the respondents? Saying that an airport *will* bring benefits suggests some misconceptions and wishful thinking.
International airports aren't built by local enterprises but by proven experts in the field; local operations would likely get some of the work but certainly not all. And the other jobs would only materialize (or last) if the airport were successful.]
- We have three post-secondary institutions in Durham Region that have a history of meeting the needs of a changing marketplace. They will be able to help meet the significant need for trained personnel during the construction and operating stages. [See previous response. What about the opportunities for graduates of Durham College's Centre for Food if the Lands were instead turned into a food hub beside, or as part of, the Rouge National Urban Park? Tourism, event planning, and culinary skills will all be in demand as the Park takes shape and becomes a popular destination for locals and tourists alike. This national park is a game-changer for the area, opening up phenomenal opportunities in the coming years, in a clean and healthy environment.]
- The populations of Durham Region and neighbouring York Region are projected to grow by 48 and 52 per cent, respectively, over the next 21 years, adding almost 900,000 people. The demand and need for an airport in the east end of the GTA, to bookend Pearson in the west end, already exists and will continue to grow. [Our earlier submission outlined the GTAA's 2010 findings on this subject: airlines, cargo, and low-cost carriers would be unlikely to split their operations or move to Pickering, and the chances of a failed airport in Pickering are far greater than the chances of an even moderately successful one. What the eastern GTA does need is improved transit between the east end and Pearson. And, ideally, faster rail service to Ottawa, Montreal, and even the U.S. border, thereby diverting some of Pearson's short-haul traffic.]
- Finally, the Mayor of Pickering and Durham Regional Chairman both received strong mandates in fall 2014 after campaigning on the economic benefits to be realized by a Pickering airport. [A more likely reason for the recent electoral success of these long-time politicians was the high level of name recognition they enjoyed in a field of lesser-known candidates. Pickering councillors campaigning at the same time found, when going door to door, that the topic of a Pickering airport was rarely if ever raised by residents, whose chief concern was the lack of jobs *today*. The exception was in North Pickering and Uxbridge, where the topic *was* raised and most residents were, as always, against an airport.]

Durham Region has been recognized over the past number of years for the significant work that has taken place to foster innovation and creativity so we

could diversify our regional employment mix. This came in response to significant job losses in the automotive manufacturing sector and has made our economy much more balanced. The Pickering airport is a crucial next step to continuing our diversification as it represents one of the largest-ever economic investments in our communities. [We applaud the gains and successes but are concerned that no apparent thought is being given to the potential impacts of climate change and how business will have to adapt. The provincial Minister of Agriculture, Jeff Leal, is certainly aware of what is happening, observing that, while the auto industry is static in Ontario, the agricultural sector is growing, and food and water security are primed to be the next big political policy issues.^[32] APBOT, too, should be examining the huge advantages to be had from two local economic assets: the area's rich and rare farmland and the new and unique national park in its midst.]

In closing, Pickering is the right place and this is the right time for a new airport. We have the work force, we have the community support and expertise, and the need for a new airport has been projected for 2030. After 42 years, the time to act is now. [More than half a dozen assertions in this closing statement could be challenged. Most have already been dealt with. As for the rest: Pickering and Ajax councils both passed resolutions in the past two years demanding, among other things, a business case from the federal government before any thought could be given to proceeding with an airport. To date, to our knowledge, no case has been made. The negatives identified by the GTAA and others indicate that building an airport here would be a mistake. And Transport Canada, its most recent study not yet launched, is clearly not looking at doing anything in the near term. Finally, we are reasonably certain that neither Ajax nor Pickering has ever canvassed its residents to determine the level of support for an airport.]

5 Fresh Political Directions

5.1 On the World Stage

On November 30, 2015, on the eve of the Paris Climate Change Conference, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau declared that, on the climate change issue, Canada “will take on a new leadership role internationally.”^[33] On December 12, as the Conference drew to a close, he stated that one of Canada’s main priorities will be investment in “green infrastructure.”^[34] Food production and healthy water and soils tend to be components of green infrastructure.

In January, in Davos, Switzerland, at the World Economic Forum, the Prime Minister stated: “My predecessor wanted you to know Canada for its resources. I want you to know Canadians for our resourcefulness.”^[35] Well, the Federal Lands qualify in both areas: They are a magnificent renewable resource, offering Canada an unparalleled opportunity to show its resourcefulness by doing something unique and visionary for the long term and the greater good. By protecting these important Lands and helping to ensure local food security for present and future generations in the country’s largest urban area, the federal government would be making a move very much in the spirit of the Paris Climate Agreement and one, as pointed out earlier, that could be an example for the world.

5.2 In Ottawa

On November 13, 2015, Prime Minister Trudeau publicly released Ministers’ mandate letters.

- The letter to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food^[36] reads in part (the italics are ours):

[...] your overarching goal will be to support the agricultural sector in a way that allows it to be *a leader in job creation and innovation*. [...] Canada’s farmers, ranchers and food processors are the foundation of our food sector. Government must use its policy and financial tools to *support the agricultural sector in its vital work*. [...]

In particular, I will expect you to [...] deliver on your top priorities:

- Invest in an Agri-Food Value Added Investment Fund to attract investment and *create good jobs in food processing*. This will provide technical and marketing assistance to help food processors *develop new value-added products that reflect changing tastes and market opportunities*.
- Develop a food policy that promotes healthy living and safe food by putting *more healthy, high-quality food, produced by Canadian ranchers and farmers*, on the tables of families across the country.
- Invest in agricultural research to support discovery science and *innovation in the sector*. [...]
- Work with provinces, territories, and other willing partners, to *help the sector adjust to climate change and better address water and soil conservation and development issues*.

In short, strengthen our agricultural community, provide access to fresh local food, and conserve water and soil in a time of climate change.

- The mandate letter to the Minister of Transport^[37] states in part:

I will expect you to encourage maximum alignment between the strategic goals of our plans for roads, ports and airports so that our systems are integrated, sustainable and allow Canadians and businesses to more easily engage globally.

Nowhere in the letter is there reference to increasing the number of Canadian airports. The emphasis is on working to “improve public transit infrastructure and green infrastructure,” along with improving investment in “roads, bridges, transportation corridors, ports, and border gateways.”

- The mandate letter to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change^[38] states in part:

In particular, I will expect you to [...] deliver on your top priorities:

- In partnership with provinces and territories, develop a plan to combat climate change *and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, consistent with our international obligations and our commitment to sustainable economic growth*. You will attend the Paris climate conference with me and, upon our return, we will set a date to meet with provincial and territorial leaders to develop a pan-Canadian framework for addressing climate change.
- In partnership with provinces and territories, *establish national emissions-reduction targets [...] These targets will recognise the economic cost and catastrophic impact that a greater-than-two-degree increase in average global temperatures would represent, as well as the need for Canada to do its part to prevent that from happening. [...]*
- Protect our National Parks by limiting development within them, and where possible, *work with nearby communities to help grow local eco-tourism industries and create jobs*.

This last point, in particular, highlights the employment opportunities that could open up on the remaining Federal Lands, whether within the Rouge National Urban Park or if put to compatible uses (agriculture, natural heritage) adjacent to the Park.

5.3 In Ontario

On December 8, 2015, the Honourable David Crombie presented to the Province the final report of the Advisory Panel for the Coordinated Review of the Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, and Niagara Escarpment Plan.^[39] The recommendations in *Planning for Health, Prosperity and Growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: 2015-2041*, if implemented by the Province (as they are expected to be), will place emphasis on land protections and will substantially chart Ontario’s future.

The Panel underlined the fundamental importance of agriculture. Its recommendations stressed (again, the italics are ours):

- *Supporting productive agriculture*
- Recognizing *the importance of locally sourced food and urban agriculture*
- *Applying an agriculture lens* to other provincial policies and programs (such as climate change, transportation and infrastructure...) (p. 13)

The section “Mainstreaming Climate Change” (p. 15), describes climate change as “one of the most pressing issues facing the GGH, and the Province as a whole.” Recommended tools:

- Promoting *stronger protection and enhancement of natural systems and agricultural lands*
- Directing upper- and single-tier municipalities to *prepare climate change plans* or incorporate policies into official plans *to advance climate change mitigation and adaptation goals* (p. 16)

In other words, future land-use determinations will have to be made with a view to climate-change mitigation. We point out again: The remaining Federal Lands are almost entirely natural systems and agricultural lands.

In a recent article in the *Peterborough Examiner*,^[32] Ontario’s Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Jeff Leal, predicted that the province’s agriculture industry will “eclipse the auto industry,” noting that the agricultural sector is growing while the auto industry isn’t. He also emphasized that fresh water and food security are the next big political policy issues, referring to the way climate change will have an impact on the production of food. The consequences for food production of the drought in the U.S. will “give Ontario a big leg up,” he said. The article continued:

Both Leal, the MPP for Peterborough, and the head of Ontario’s Rural Caucus, Northumberland-Quinte West MPP Lou Rinaldi, agreed that Ontario still has agricultural land close to large populations and it needs [to] develop this valuable resource while protecting even Class 4 land (the poorest class for growing crops).

Agriculture stories must be on the front pages and Ontario needs to do more in the Agriculture industry, both Leal and Rinaldi stressed.

One of the opportunities is to market to the eating habits of Ontario’s multicultural communities and immigrants, they agreed.

We agree too, and we said as much on p. 4 of this document. Minister Leal’s statements should be generating interest, excitement, and innovative thinking throughout Ontario’s farming regions – and most notably, in the largely agricultural Region of Durham.

5.4 But in Durham Region?

The Region’s chair contributed the following to the local news agency’s “Sixteen words on 2016 from 16 Durham residents”: “Jobs, fair investment in Durham transit and infrastructure, effective representation, sustainable development, Pickering airport, and ...jobs!”^[40]

Pickering’s mayor, at his New Year’s Levee, expressed his eagerness to see an airport built here, telling his audience that it would bring Pickering 15,000 jobs.

What jobs would those be, precisely? Where are the commitments and guarantees? Where do these numbers come from?

While our local municipal leaders continue to rely on hopes and repeat the same mantra they’ve been intoning for decades, other municipalities are benefitting economically from

fresh thinking. On December 8, the *Hamilton Spectator* carried the headline “Hamilton home to new flour mill operation.”^[41] With \$50 million in funding from the grain-handler and a \$5 million grant from the Province, the mill will be built, 16 new jobs will be created, and Hamilton will have taken another step along the road to a new and different future. Canada’s steel capital, said the *Spectator*, could well become “an agri-food business hub.”

London has been doing the same thing, attracting new food-processing industries (one is “a giant German frozen-pizza maker”; another is a Spanish chocolate company). The draw? The region’s agricultural strengths.^[42]

Meanwhile, east of Toronto, local mill owners can only look on enviously, having spent years advocating for an upgrade to the Port of Oshawa, to include elevators and perhaps a processing mill. With the right infrastructure in place, both could be viable businesses, given that 45 per cent of Durham Region is Greenbelt farmland. Currently, the cheapest way for the local mill to ship grain to Montreal customers is via bulk truck to Sarnia for unloading onto grain lakers, using the Cargill elevators there, followed by a long return trip past Oshawa and down the Seaway to the Port of Montreal.^[43] How many big grain trucks does it take to fill a laker? 1,000. A grossly inefficient and wasteful situation, *and not the way to reduce our carbon footprint*. The mill owners’ suggestion could have been welcomed as a starting point for an integrated plan for a regional food hub in agricultural Durham. It wasn’t.

Economic depression in Pickering isn’t a phenomenon confined to the Federal Lands and the communities that border them. It has infiltrated South Pickering and sent its tentacles much further afield. As long as the mirage of an airport still flickers ever so faintly and intermittently on the horizon, too many people will cling to the belief that our area will one day be magically transformed. Meanwhile, we drift in chronic, debilitating limbo, the mythical airport an excuse for waiting and assuming. Nothing changes. Nothing gets better.

As our new Member of Parliament said during the last election campaign, “It’s time to move on!” She was right. While the mirage persists, so will the local paralysis – always abetted, as one MP confided to us a while back, by the unfounded expectation of huge injections of federal money to see the project through. Cancelling the airport and protecting the site to ensure food security would rouse the region from its torpor and allow it to focus on the many possibilities the new national park in our midst is about to open up. We have unprecedented opportunities here, the fundamental ingredients already in place (if we choose to protect them and use them wisely). “Potential future” would become “right now,” and the area could start its long-awaited economic renaissance.

6 Into the Future

Dr Polonsky, by the time you submit your report, the Federal Lands will be into their 45th year of economic decline, their March 2 anniversary no cause for celebration. It's been forty-four years of callous government treatment and serious mismanagement, restrictive and punishing leases, harrowing house inspections, summary evictions, traumatic demolitions. A prosperous farming community was wiped off the map. Residents on and around the Lands continue to live under a perpetual cloud, no relief in sight. The area has been deliberately depopulated, ground down, turned into the equivalent of a rural slum. This is the legacy of decades of failed stewardship while one federal department waited (and still waits) for the green light to start airport construction again. How long must the area continue to be victimized by the consequences of a wrong decision based on bad advice and exaggerated projections, almost half a century ago?

That world is long gone. Climate change is upon us, and we face challenges never encountered before. As we've noted many times, the world's population is expanding at record speed while arable land is fast disappearing. The FAO reports that 90 percent of the world's food energy intake comes from crops.^[44] We ignore such facts at our peril.

And these facts are why we must save North Pickering's prime farmland. Airports, industrial parks, shopping malls, and office buildings don't need prime farmland. Farmers absolutely do.

* * *

Within a week of the end of the Paris Climate Change Conference, the UK government issued 159 new onshore fracking licences to the oil industry, even allowing fracking under the country's national parks.^[45] It was as if the Conference had never happened. Fury, frustration, and worry were the direct results of such deeply cynical actions.

We can do better in Canada. We must. Our Prime Minister has made known Canada's plan to adopt a new leadership role on the climate change front, and has said we are committed to improving the state of the world. We applaud his words. But how can those broad statements be translated into positive and influential actions?

One way to show that Canada means business – and right *now* – would be to announce the cancellation of a “potential future airport” and commit instead to permanently protecting those rural acres as a source of clean water and as a provider of fresh food for ourselves and for export, now and into the future. The Lands offer Canada the opportunity to set an important precedent and send a powerful message. Let's take it!

Countries and regions concerned about their loss of food security may need to consider placing legal bans on the sale of arable land for nonagricultural purposes.

– Julian Cribb, *The Coming Famine: The Global Food Crisis and What We Can Do to Avoid It*



Agricultural stakeholders have asked for other types of support for agri-food infrastructure, including regional food hubs ... The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has also undertaken work on the concept of regional agri-food strategies ... to create the conditions for sustainable agriculture.

– David Crombie, Panel Report, December 2015, p. 95



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- p. 2 Bill Lishman (southeast quadrant of the Federal Lands from the air)
- p. 17 Arthur Horne (Blunderland [Brougham], c.1972)
- p. 10 Pat Valentine (encroaching Markham)
- p. 32 Pat Valentine (encroaching Stouffville); Mary Delaney (detail: fresh food from the Lands)

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