

STUDY CHARTS PATHWAY TO PROSPERITY... NOW!



Historic Brougham Hall was packed last week as Land Over Landings released a landmark study, charting a clear pathway to prosperity for the remaining Federal Lands if protected for agriculture and agri-tourism.

Our Chair, Mary Delaney, noted that yet another Transport Canada study is due to be released this year, adding, “But now we have the numbers! Now we have an alternative to this airport plan.”

Host David Crombie, who has opposed the airport since his years as mayor of Toronto in the 1970s, pointed out in his introductory remarks that neither Pearson’s latest Master Plan nor last year’s Southern Ontario Aviation Network report even mentioned a Pickering airport. “I have a thought today. *That we’re about to win!*”

The numbers Mary referred to, delivered to a rapt audience by consultants Dr John Groenewegen and Dr Atif Kubursi, were impressive and may even understate, they said, the potential for economic rebirth here, if the threat of an airport is lifted and agricultural renewal is launched under long leases.

The consultants acknowledged that jobs from airport construction would be significant but are at least a generation away, if then, whereas their agricultural vision would provide thousands of jobs starting now. Appropriate custodianship and planning would trigger infrastructure upgrades resulting in \$136 million in economic activity province-wide, as leaseholders repaired tile drainage, fixed or replaced buildings and equipment, dug new wells, and planted orchards – all impossible under short-term leases. As Dr Kubursi pointed out, “Economists agree that uncertainty is the death of investment.”

The consultants also stressed that the greatest potential for growth, revenue, and jobs here is not in agriculture itself but *in tourism based on agriculture*.



Top: David Crombie hosts. Above: Dr John Groenewegen, Dr Atif Kubursi. Below: Edward McDonnell, Steve Parish; Musa Mansuar, Lynn Laflamme; Stephen Bocking, John Wadland, Robert Paehlke, Marina Queirolo





Above: Kim Empringham; Richard Reesor, Mitch Morowitz, Michael Robertson
Below: Glen Murray, Mark Sheriff, Janet Horner, Mike Whittamore



Below: Mike Whittamore, MP Gary Anandasangaree, Heather Rigby; Allan Wells, Pauline Browes; MP Jennifer O'Connell. Bottom: Ellen Reesor, Matt Rock, Angelina Reesor, Liz Beesley, Kate Collins, Philip Collins



Photos by Alexis Whalen

If their vision were implemented, the value of annual *agricultural* output would grow from \$3.7 million to \$25 million, and economic activity from \$7 million to \$48 million across Ontario. Add *tourism* to the mix, and economic activity across Ontario would grow to \$221 million. Jobs would increase from 32 in the region to 2,051 across the province.

There is the potential for high-end jobs in agricultural research and innovation related to climate change, an aspect applauded by former Ontario environment minister, Glen Murray, who now heads the Pembina Institute, a clean-energy think tank.

Also present for the VIP release were current mayors of Oshawa, Whitby, Ajax, and Uxbridge; current and former MPs; heads of the Greenbelt Foundation, Sustain Ontario, Ontario Farmland Trust, the Greater Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance, and the Toronto Food Policy Council; representatives from Environmental Defence, Food & Water First, Parks Canada and Transport Canada, provincial and local farming organizations, universities, local food advocates and writers; managers of Toronto's Evergreen Brickworks and Wychwood Barns farmers markets; and excited young farmers from Joyfully Organic, Foggy River Farm, and Reesors Farm Market. The "architect of the Greenbelt," Victor Doyle, was there, as were our long-time partners, Green Durham Association, and members of People or Planes, including Paula Lishman and Michael and Janet Robertson.

Two evenings later, we filled the Hall again, as our consultants presented their findings to our local supporters and donors, and we saluted our vision of North Pickering Farms with a fabulous cake!

"A Future for the Lands" is available at landoverlandings.com/resources

Land Over Landings
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