

The Big Lie Exposed

Those who support an airport in Pickering – and this small but vocal crowd includes local politicians and general aviation pilots – insist on repeating a Big Lie: that KPMG “determined that the GTA would need a new airport *by 2036*.”

The KPMG report did not say this. What, exactly, did it say?

KPMG studied possible need over a 20-year period: 2016-2036. To see if more air passenger capacity would be needed by 2036, KPMG chose four possible scenarios (i.e., “what if?” exercises) and found that:

#1: “a new airport in southern Ontario would not be required from a capacity standpoint.”

#2: “there will be sufficient capacity ... without the requirement to build a new airport.”

#3: “a new airport to provide additional capacity is not required in southern Ontario ...”

#4: “an additional airport would not be required to meet 2036 demand...”

KPMG also assessed scenarios of other types of airport, including an industrial/specialty passenger airport for Pickering, but warned that:

“the exact timing for developing the airport and the anticipated rate of growth of traffic at a new airport on the Pickering Lands are unknown.”

KPMG repeatedly warned that their report made no recommendations for any type of airport:

“because this study is exploratory in nature, [...] definite conclusions regarding the potential of each type of airport cannot be drawn.

There is a significant level of uncertainty associated with the assumptions used to generate the scenarios, and it is likely that the future will deviate from the assumptions presented in this report.”

KPMG could find no need for a Pickering airport *even before* Covid-19 emptied airports the world over, and sent global aviation into a tailspin.

KPMG could find no need for a Pickering airport *even though* their study omitted to consider the climate crisis, and *even though* the climate crisis will be a major and inevitable complicating factor for aviation in the coming years.

Transport Canada understood the purport of KPMG’s report. Their media release of March 5, 2020 stated:

“...that no decision has been made to develop an airport on the Pickering Lands, and that there will be no immediate need for an airport until at least 2038 [sic] ... Given the study’s findings, Transport Canada will retain the land for future consideration ... there is no business case to support the immediate development of an airport on the Pickering Lands.”

Transport Minister Marc Garneau confirmed this to Durham Regional Chair John Henry on March 25, 2020.

For the record: No federal study since the airport announcement in 1972 has been able to determine a date on which a Pickering airport would actually be needed, which is why no airport has ever been built.

It is unfortunate that individuals who should know better choose to repeat the Big Lie, distorting the KPMG report’s findings to support their preferred vision.

Land Over Landings will be happy to provide source details for all quoted passages to anyone who asks for them. Can the individuals who are repeating the Big Lie provide source details for their claims?