



Press Release

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Canadian Owners and Pilots Association (COPA) Highlights Need for an Airport on the Pickering Lands Now

Transport Canada (TC) engaged the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA) in 2010 to conduct a Study of the need for retention of the Pickering Lands for an airport and their report, issued in 2011, contains some alarming observations and recommendations about General Aviation* (GA). COPA commissioned an independent review of the GTAA's report (<http://www.copanational.org/files/Pickering%20Lands%20Needs%20Assessment.pdf>) to check the validity of their findings concerning GA and also advise TC about GA's needs based on the facts that COPA's review uncovered.

The conclusions drawn from COPA's review, conducted by Malone Given Parsons Ltd., differ dramatically from the GTAA's report, in particular in the trends and in the ability for area airports to handle or accept additional GA traffic to the degree reported by the GTAA. For example, the review concludes that the GTAA report overstates the 2032 system capacity for GA and corporate jets by a factor of three in terms of movements, and a factor of six on the capacity for basing aircraft at the various existing airports.

COPA's review remains relevant today and our assertion that a new airport is needed is even more relevant now given that Oshawa has decided against a runway extension and Toronto Airways has decided to shut down its very active flight training business entirely, in part because a suitable location could not be found for when Buttonville shuts down next year.

"From our review of TC statistics and interviews with area airport managers and aviation businesses we conclude that, contrary to the GTAA's perception, GA is not declining. Furthermore, airport managers confirm that they are unable or unwilling to handle the level of GA traffic that the GTAA assumes can be accommodated", said COPA President and CEO Kevin Psutka. "Our review also updates the report with facts that have a significant impact on the GTAA's findings, such as that Buttonville airport will in fact close and Billy Bishop airport is not able to take any appreciable increase in GA traffic. **From this intensive review, we conclude that a new airport in the Toronto area is needed now.**"

A related concern that the GTAA's Study brings to light is that there is an urgent need for a systems approach to GA, spearheaded by TC. "**The conclusions of the GTAA's Study build the case for retaining the Pickering Lands for a future airline airport, while it essentially writes off GA**", said Psutka. "**This narrow focus, taken in isolation, would be damaging for the overall health of GA, not only in the GTA but well beyond. Recognition of the value of GA and consequent support in the form of a GA policy remains critical but absent from the federal government's agenda.**"

COPA is the largest Aviation Association in Canada. We represent people who fly aircraft for personal transportation and recreation. Its mission is to protect Personal Aviation and promote it as a valued, integral and sustainable part of the Canadian Community.

*General Aviation (GA) is all aviation activity that is neither scheduled airline nor military. GA is by far the largest sector of aviation in Canada in terms of number of aircraft and pilots.