



Transport Canada Transports Canada

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Véronique Boucher Lalonde - A/Senior Policy Advisor
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada
160 Elgin Street, 22nd Floor
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3

Subject: Transport Canada's Participation in the Rouge National Urban Park Study and Initial Comments on the Draft Terms of Reference

Dear Ms. Boucher Lalonde,

On behalf of Transport Canada (TC), I am pleased to submit the following comments on the proposed Rouge National Urban Park Study and development of the Terms of Reference.

TC's mandate is to serve the public interest through the promotion of a safe and secure, efficient and environmentally responsible transportation system including in the air, marine, rail and road sectors. We work towards these objectives by:

- Overseeing policies, laws and regulations related to transportation;
- Conducting inspections, enforcement activities and surveillance of the transportation industry's equipment, operations and facilities;
- Providing funding to organizations for projects that strengthen the transportation network, including safety improvement projects, technological innovations and green transportation initiatives; and
- Managing a diverse portfolio of strategic real property assets to enable the safe, efficient, technologically advanced, environmentally sustainable and essential movement of people and goods to/from local, regional, provincial, international markets and remote communities.

While TC is not directly responsible for all aspects or modes of transportation, we play a key leadership role in ensuring that all parts of the transportation system across Canada work together effectively. We do so by collaborating with various groups including Indigenous people and communities, industry, provincial and territorial governments and international partners.

As the owner of federal lands known as the Pickering Lands for more than 50 years, a portion of which contributed to the establishment of the Rouge National Urban Park in 2015, TC will have essential knowledge and information to support the study goals to understand the potential effects, including cumulative effects, of past, ongoing, and potential future development projects on the integrity of the Rouge National Urban Park and its management objectives.

The Pickering Lands is a designated airport site under the Aeronautics Act, and as such, is managed through the application of Airport Zoning Regulations (AZRs). The Pickering Lands are subject to the Pickering Airport Site Zoning Regulations (PASZR) to ensure that lands adjacent to and in the vicinity of the airport site are used in a manner compatible with the safe and viable operation of a future airport and aircraft. Lands subject to the PASZR have building height restrictions, along with other provisions, such as for electronic (radio) interference, natural growth and bird hazards to aviation.

TC has taken a balanced approach to the management of the Pickering Lands, ensuring environmental, community, economic and aviation demands are being met. Most of the Pickering Lands are currently used for agriculture, primarily grain farming. Land use, by lease type, is comprised of agricultural leases, residential and commercial leases and licenses.

Transport Canada is also aware of Indigenous interest in the study area and have engaged with Indigenous communities with respect to the Pickering Lands. There are well-known archaeological sites within the Pickering Lands area.

As aviation demand is expected to grow alongside significant population growth in Ontario, TC has periodically studied aviation capacity to ensure that aviation demands are being met. Most recently, in April 2023, TC initiated work to study the requirement for additional airport capacity in Southern Ontario. The study will analyze current and future airport supply and demand in Southern Ontario, undertake a formal consultation process and develop options on how to address future capacity constraints in the region. This work will look at all options including at existing airports and the Pickering Lands site. This is a first step towards making a final decision to address future airport capacity constraints in the region, and on the future of the Pickering Lands.

Any decision future of the Pickering Lands must be made on solid evidence and demonstrated aviation demand and capacity, as well as consultation and engagement with stakeholders and Indigenous Peoples. It must also take into consideration tourism, business activity, immigration levels and economic growth. It should also be noted that a decision to construct an airport on these lands would be subject to applicable requirements under the Impact Assessment Act and other applicable legislation. TC believes the outcome of our study would help inform the development of realistic future scenarios to assess the potential impacts on the ecological integrity of the Rouge National Urban Park.

Transport Canada would be happy to engage in additional discussion with the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada regarding the timelines and coordination of our respective study approaches.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these initial comments.

Respectfully Yours,

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David Zeit
Regional Senior Environmental Supervisor