

May 21, 2026

The Right Honourable Mark Carney
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A2

The Honourable Steven MacKinnon
Minister of Transport
Transport Canada
330 Sparks Street Ottawa, ON
K1A 0N5

Dear Prime Minister Carney and Minister MacKinnon:

RE: Response to proposed Billy Bishop Airport Expansion

The Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA) writes to express serious concerns regarding the Province of Ontario's proposal to expand the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, including runway extensions to accommodate commercial jets and a significant increase in passenger volume. The risks that this type of development and its operations would pose to the Toronto economy, adjacent neighbourhoods, and the open space along Toronto's waterfront are significant, and have been opposed by Toronto residents, business owners and agencies for decades. We urge the federal government to ensure that any decisions regarding the airport's future are grounded in comprehensive environmental assessment, meaningful consultation with Indigenous Peoples and affected communities, and full consideration of the long-term impacts on Toronto's waterfront.

Landscape architects have planned and implemented many projects along Toronto's waterfront, from the early days of Harbourfront and the parkland master plans of the 1980s, through the highly respected Royal Commission on Toronto's Waterfront. Many of the revitalization initiatives that evolved from this era of study and public dialogue were executed in partnership with Waterfront Toronto, The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, City of Toronto, Federal Fisheries and Oceans, the Toronto Port Authority and many other cultural organizations and agencies. This work was grounded in decades of comprehensive consultation with stakeholders, communities, and in partnership with the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat Peoples. Design and development of the waterfront was built on the principles of ensuring high quality urban realm and parks within evolving waterfront neighbourhoods, achieving healthy, livable communities. The proposed airport expansion would seriously undermine more than 30 years of this work.

Billions of dollars were invested by the federal, provincial and municipal governments to create this public infrastructure, which in turn incentivized over \$10B in private sector investment, creating a dynamic and balanced mix of uses. What were once underused and outdated brownfields have been transformed into a beautiful, green and globally recognized urban waterfront that attracts locals and visitors alike throughout the year. The central waterfront contributes approximately \$13 million per year to Canada's gross domestic product and attracts 18 million visitors annually. The expansion of Billy Bishop Airport to accommodate more than twice the passengers currently served at the Ottawa International Airport will irrevocably reverse the work and investments by generations.

The negative impacts to recreation and park space on the waterfront and Toronto Islands would be immense. Increases to air and water pollution from expanded airport operations would erode years of work with public agencies to improve the shoreline health for human contact and aquatic wildlife. The pride and value that Torontonians hold for their all-season

waterfront and well-planned neighbourhoods cannot be underestimated. The beautiful beaches, active trail system, shoreline aquatic habitat restoration, urban promenades and outdoor event space all rely on a healthy environment, as do the people who live and visit the waterfront. The additional noise and air pollution will subvert the quality of life for waterfront residents, workers and millions of visitors. The Port Lands Flood Protection Project, including the Don River renaturalization and the newly completed Biidaasige Park, are just a few key examples of the significant new public investment that would be impacted.

These special places and adjacent neighbourhoods cannot tolerate the scale of impact that the proposed airport redevelopment would bring. The Toronto waterfront and Toronto Islands are located on the ancestral territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, and the proposal raises serious concerns about Indigenous cultural and treaty rights along these shorelines. The current revitalized waterfront delivers substantial benefits to the economy through residential use, public events, and tourism, and supports future phases of development including hundreds of affordable housing units whose residents will depend on access to these amenities.

The proposal put forward by the Ontario government lacks substantial public justification and is not in the public interest. The scale and associated impacts that have been discussed would overwhelm the waterfront legacy and communities built over generations. Such a development would diminish Toronto's well-earned reputation as a global leader in quality of life and livability.

The Prime Minister and federal government must not allow the Toronto Port Authority to proceed with the expansion of Billy Bishop Airport for commercial jet operations. The federal government has both the authority and the responsibility to prevent irreparable damage to Canada's largest and best-known city. Over the past four decades, Ottawa has recognized the value of the Toronto waterfront and has nurtured that legacy. This is not the moment to abandon it.

As the national voice of landscape architects across Canada, the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects looks forward to continuing to be part of the proud legacy of Toronto's waterfront, and would welcome the opportunity to continue this conversation in greater detail.

Yours respectfully,



Michelle Legault, Honorary CSLA Member
Executive Director
Canadian Society of Landscape Architects

cc: Ms. Julie Dzerowicz, MP, Chair, Toronto Liberal Caucus

The CSLA is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing the art, science, and practice of landscape architecture in Canada. Representing over 3,200 landscape architects, associates, interns, and students, the CSLA advocates for sustainable and socially just communities, climate change adaptation, nature-based solutions, ecological restoration and enhancement, and the preservation of cultural landscapes.