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Developing Air and Land Control at Toronto's Airport: Local, Regional, and National Conflict and Cooperation, 1937–72

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UNIVERSITY OF
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Nick Lombardo

Abstract

Today, Toronto's Lester B. Pearson International Airport is the busiest in the country and anchors the second-largest employment zone in Canada. However, the growth of the airport and the surrounding region were not always in synch. Rather, from its approval in 1937 the airport and the surrounding region found themselves frequently at odds over land use planning and airport expansions. Overlapping federal, provincial, and municipal control over various aspects of airport and land use planning made the airport project seem rife with conflict. However, this paper finds that this jurisdictional and territorial overlap led to innovative governance around the airport. Despite the absence of legislated relationships between the various bodies responsible for governing airport expansion and surrounding land use, local officials in present-day Mississauga, Toronto, and Brampton, along with their on-the-ground counterparts from Ottawa and the province of Ontario, would construct a durable framework for informal cooperation that would enable the complementary planning of airport and surrounding land uses. This paper examines three key moments of airport expansion and adaptation with local planners: the 1953 Malton Airport Zoning ordinance, the 1958 jetport plan, and the 1968 expansion plan. It argues that at each of these points, governmental and non-governmental actors worked to construct a flexible framework through which information sharing and complementary planning could be carried out without formal or legislative approval. The result, this paper argues, was a robust infrastructure and land use planning coalition that continues today.

Keywords: airports, land use planning, infrastructure, intergovernmental relations

JEL codes: H10, H77, R58

Developing Air and Land Control at Toronto's Airport: Local, Regional, and National Conflict and Cooperation, 1937–72

I. Introduction

In 1963, Toronto was poised to enter the jet age. A new state-of-the-art airport terminal, longer runways, and other improvements costing more than \$30 million, built over the previous five years, would soon be ready to meet the needs of a projected five million air passengers annually. “By the time the autumn leaves start to fall Toronto will have been severely caught in the slipstream of the jet age racing to become Canada’s focal point for international air travel,” wrote one gushing *Globe and Mail* columnist (Froggatt 1963).

Even in such a celebratory piece, however, it was clear that not all was rosy at the airport in Malton. The engineering accomplishments of the new terminal paled “compared with the argument and strife that has surrounded the project.” Beset by delays, complaints, and “the attacks of vote-searching politicians” (Froggatt 1963), it seemed a miracle that the modern Toronto International Airport was ever built at all.

In the end, not only was the new terminal built, but it would be followed less than a decade later by an even larger expansion project. Furthermore, the airport would soon be surrounded by one of the largest industrial and commercial employment zones in Canada, with transport, manufacturing, logistics, and office park uses.¹ Today, Toronto’s airport sits at the centre of the country’s largest urban agglomeration and one of the fastest-growing urban regions in North America. It is a significant employment site, the second-largest in the country, and for many people, the first place they see on arriving in Canada (Blais 2016).

The development of Toronto’s airport and the surrounding community occurred not in spite of meddling by officials from multiple governments and advocates from various sectors, but *because* of their input and efforts.² From its beginning in the 1930s, Toronto’s Pearson International Airport and the development around

1. Large airports, particularly in metropolitan regions, have been shown to be drivers of clusters of economic activity, especially aviation-, transportation-, and logistics-related employment (Brueckner 2003). This type of airport-adjacent cluster, termed variously Airport Cities or Aerotropolis, has been the focus of research (Appold and Kasarda 2013; Charles et al. 2007; Florida, Mellander, and Holgerson 2015). Indeed, Addie (2014) has gone so far as to propose the term “aero regionalism” as a way of understanding the particular relationship between globalization, air travel, and city-regionalism through territory.

2. Attention to local issues, in particular relations with immediate neighbours, has been shown to be central to the success, or failure, of airports in a variety of contexts (Dobruszkes 2008; May and Hill 2006; Suau-Sanchez, Pallares-Barbera, and Paül 2011).

it were the product of a vast web of negotiations, conflict, and investment by the federal government, local municipalities, and the Province of Ontario.³ The growth of the airport from the 1950s to the 1970s had enormous impacts on the area around it, leading to vocal opposition and conflict. Nevertheless, it was built and expanded by the federal Department of Transport (DOT) and surrounded by largely complementary land uses, roads and highways, and other infrastructure built by municipal and provincial governments.⁴

This paper explores the tensions between federal, provincial, and municipal governments and the role of the airport in catalyzing informal (that is, non-legislated and unstated in official rules) regional governance and planning processes in the Toronto area. It explores how the relationships between these different levels of government and jurisdictions changed over time. These changes, I argue, led to a consensus on regional growth, change, and airport development at the core of a municipally driven effort to work cooperatively with the federal government.

This case study highlights the ways in which airports function as important sites of multi-jurisdictional planning and land use management. Moreover, as we will see, these planning processes are carried out largely in a quasi-formal, ad hoc manner, leveraging the private sector as a key point of connection between municipal, federal, and provincial officials.

As large-scale infrastructure projects, airports have unique features. First, their location at the city's edge makes them significant transportation and employment zones in a suburban area. Second, this edge location means that they function within a nexus of multiple jurisdictions, from the local to the global, with tensions arising from the often-contradictory interests of each level (Addie 2016; Cidell 2004, 2006; Filion and Keil 2017; Young and Keil 2010).

This case study of Pearson International Airport and its surrounding region demonstrates three key aspects of effective multi-jurisdictional planning: shared goals and consensus, municipally led information sharing and willingness to collaborate, and the role of private-sector actors in leveraging political and economic change in a rapid and often informal manner.

3. The airport has had several names since it was built. Chronologically, they are Malton Airport, Toronto International Airport (Malton), Toronto International Airport, and Lester B. Pearson International Airport. Either the name contemporaneous to the era being discussed or simply "the airport" is used in this paper.

4. The official and common names of the institutions involved changed considerably over the period described in this paper. The Ministry of Transport, for instance, has been known since the 1970s as Transport Canada, and variously in official and unofficial documents since the 1930s as the Transport Department, Department of Transport, or Transport Ministry. Because its jurisdictional powers and responsibilities have remained largely static, this paper refers to it mainly as the Department of Transport (DOT) throughout. When a name change coincides with jurisdictional or boundary changes, as is the case with the shifting borders and status of the Township of Toronto, the Town of Mississauga (1960), the City of Mississauga (1974), Peel County, and Peel Region (1974), I note the changing name.

To understand how local concerns existed in tension with federal decisions about the Toronto airport, this paper focuses on several key moments. It begins with the legal and jurisdictional history of the airport before the Second World War. Next, it describes the expansion of Toronto International Airport at the dawn of the jet age, an era characterized by extreme development pressures around the airport in today's Peel Region and City of Toronto, and concerns over noise, land use control, and road networks that saw local municipalities attempting to work with each other and with a largely reluctant federal government. These negotiations resulted in institutional relationships that enabled more effective stakeholder participation during planning for a massive 1968 expansion of Toronto International Airport – a plan that was ultimately scrapped by the DOT and that sparked the creation of networks that remain in place today.

I argue that the development of Pearson Airport and its effect on regional planning resulted when local, provincial, regional, and federal officials, business leaders, developers, and residents began collaborating and interacting with one another in new and largely informal ways. This occurred despite the lack of a legal framework for cooperation on airport matters. Overlapping jurisdictions, coupled with larger political economic forces that saw Toronto become Canada's largest city during this period, forced residents, governments at every level, and business leaders from a variety of sectors as well as property developers to scramble in order to shape the development of the airport in a way that would benefit their own interests and the region as a whole.

Pearson's history shows how local conflicts over large-scale infrastructure sites like airports can lead to new forms of multi-jurisdictional cooperation and relationship-building and demonstrates the importance for local planning jurisdictions of dealing with higher levels of government, even in the absence of any formal relationship. The federal government, as we see here, is no small player in the world of municipal land use planning.

2. Toronto's Airport at Malton

This section outlines the history of the airport, from its inception and development as a federal-municipal project operated by the Toronto Harbour Commission in 1937, until its purchase by the federal government in 1958. Examining this history reveals the inherently multi-jurisdictional and multi-scalar nature of the airport and its governance from the very beginning.

2.1 *Building an airport, 1930–37*

The earliest plans for an airport at Toronto indicated the multiple roles it was to play: aviation infrastructure, city-boosting status symbol, and facilitator of national and international connections for corporations and regional economic growth in Southern Ontario. In 1930, the Toronto Harbour Commission (THC), a joint federal-municipal body created in 1911 to manage the city's harbour infrastructure, put forward one of the first comprehensive plans for an "air harbour" in 1930.

Their plan called for a sea- and land-plane base at the western edge of the Toronto Islands, where today's Billy Bishop (Toronto Island) Airport now sits. The site was considered especially appealing because it was "within one mile of the main hotel and terminal station," that is, Union Station (Langton 1930, p. 37). The proposed airport would replace the temporary air harbour built on the waterfront just east of Yonge Street, which hosted regular service to Buffalo and was aimed at establishing regular air service to other cities in Southern Ontario, Québec, and the Northeastern United States.

The THC plan was particularly appealing to Toronto's business community. As the plan wended its way through Depression-era council debates, the local Board of Trade (BOT) gave its full support for the Island airport (*Globe and Mail* 1935). Toronto's City Council agreed with the need for a modern airport: in 1935, it formed a committee to study the issue.

From the very beginning, the airport was a site of cooperation and negotiation between local government and the private sector. The committee's three councillors were joined by representatives of businesses and other organizations interested in the aviation industry. Indeed, the importance of the airport to the economic growth of the region, even for sectors not directly related to aviation, was clear. One councillor worried that if Toronto could not build an airport, the Northern Ontario mining business would be diverted to Hamilton or Montréal (*Globe and Mail* 1936).

Building the airport, however, would not be as simple as a council vote. THC would be responsible for building and operating the site. But first, THC required City Council to approve the plan and to release the funds necessary for the project. City Council in turn would need the Province of Ontario to pass enabling laws to allow it to raise funds without bringing the issue to a citywide referendum. And the federal government had final say on the issue, because the DOT's civil aviation division had the power to approve and regulate any airfield in Canada. The project needed to secure the buy-in of the aviation sector, including Trans-Canada Airlines (TCA), a crown corporation, as well as aviation manufacturers and the business travellers and tourists who would drive the traffic at the airport.

While much of City Council and Toronto businesses wanted an airport close to the central business and hotel districts, aviation experts and federal engineers were more concerned about the need to enable air traffic well into the future. In an early inspection of the Island, the federal aviation inspector proclaimed that the site was not "adequate and suitable for all types of aircraft, all the year operations...and is not recommended as a terminal airport" (Dodds 1936, p. 3).⁵ The DOT, THC, and Toronto's City Council therefore agreed to look at six other sites across the city and metropolitan region, including the site in Malton, a village in Toronto Township within Peel County, more than 20 kilometres from Toronto's core.

5. Federal officials were sensitive to local concerns about accessibility and continued to include the Island airport as part of their larger plan, along with the other soon-to-be-named site elsewhere in the area (Wilson 1936).

Several factors made Malton the ideal site. It had pre-existing road and rail connections, flat land outside the built-up area to meet the 2,000-foot clearance zone around the airport, and a lack of obstacles for take-offs and landings (MacTaggart 1937, p. 8). The decision was therefore based on the needs of aviators and the preferences of the federal government. For many local officials, the Village of Malton was too far from downtown Toronto, outside their municipal borders, too costly, and too large for current needs. In the end, however, not only did federal and municipal officials choose Malton as the best site, but the City of Toronto more than doubled its land purchase to more than 1,200 acres of Peel County farmland to allow for “future developments in aviation” and make Malton one of the largest airfields in North America (*Globe and Mail* 1937a).

The DOT approved both Malton and the Island Airport for construction and an Airport Agreement was signed between the City of Toronto and the federal government. City Council voted in July 1937 to approve construction at an estimated total cost of \$1,886,760 for both airports. Of this, it was expected that the city would pay for roughly half the total by issuing debentures. The City agreed to provide the sites at Malton and the Island for the airports, to be set aside and maintained “for the purpose of establishing permanent public airports,” with the Minister of Transport having final say over any conversion or sale of lands. Moreover, any alteration to the airports would have to be approved by the Minister (*Globe and Mail* 1937b).

The agreement included other provisions for local uses, including the stipulation that the City would establish zoning in the airport lands and adjacent to it to prohibit tall buildings, and would lease lands at the airport to the federal government for meteorological and aviation use. In return, Ottawa would pay \$100,000 towards Malton immediately and a further \$100,000 after construction was complete towards the cost of runway construction (Department of Transport 1937, pp. 8–10). The decision also required cooperation from Toronto Township, which would have to close more than 3,000 feet of roadway in the area (*Globe and Mail* 1937c).

Construction at Malton began in 1937. By fall 1938 the THC’s work on what was considered to be “potentially one of the finest airports in North America” was nearing completion (*Globe and Mail* 1938d). The operation of the airport reflected the complexity of its planning. Built by the THC on land owned by the City of Toronto in the County of Peel, the airport would be operated by the DOT, which would lease the land from the City (*Globe and Mail* 1938c).

On Monday October 17, 1938, Malton opened for operation – an event of national importance. Toronto provided the missing link that allowed a new east-west express air service to connect Montréal with Vancouver (*Globe and Mail* 1938a). Carrying “orchids for Winnipeg and cheese for Vancouver, samples of roofing and chewing gum for Regina,” the first TCA flight landed in Toronto. After refuelling and taking on more cargo, it departed for Winnipeg (*Globe and Mail*

1938b). About six months later, TCA began regular scheduled passenger flights from Malton, making it the city's chief airport (*Globe and Mail* 1939).

2.2 *Growing pains in and around the airport, 1940–58*

Like the airports of other major cities across North America, such as Midway in Chicago or Los Angeles International Airport, the Second World War made Malton Airport an important centre for aviation manufacturing, logistics, and services as well as air travel (Lewis 2016). When Canada entered the war on September 10, 1939, Malton Airport became a significant hub of aviation service and manufacturing not just for the Canadian war machine, but for the entire Commonwealth.

After the war, all levels of government, as well as local industry and the national aviation sector, promoted the expansion of the airport to meet the needs of what they foresaw as a booming travel industry using planes that had grown heavier, faster, and more numerous during the war. Officials from the airlines, the City of Toronto, and the federal government all conceded that expansion was required (Smith 1945, p. 2). What was also clear was that any airport renovations would require a great deal of money, with one DOT report estimating a cost of \$9 million (Jewett 1945, p. 2) – money that the City of Toronto did not have.

In 1952, the Mayor of Toronto and DOT officials began informal discussions on transferring ownership of Malton to the federal government in exchange for assistance with the redevelopment of the Island Airport. The City and the federal government recognized not only the importance of Malton as the region's premier airport, but also the need for redevelopment to serve the changing aviation market (Cowley 1952, p. 1). The negotiations went on for years, as the City pressured the federal government for more funds for an expansion of the Island Airport, while the DOT pushed back, citing technical difficulties with the site (Baldwin 1955, p. 2). The federal government, after all, had final say over any airport changes in Canada, and the City had no money to carry out the massive changes required.

In 1955, the transfer of Malton Airport to the federal government was approved in exchange for a \$2.5–\$3 million expansion program at the Island Airport. This was part of a federal plan for a \$22-million expansion program (*Globe and Mail* 1955). In 1958, the sale became final, a move that would, on paper, simplify the process of airport redevelopment and construction. With the sale, the operation and expansion of the airport ostensibly became the sole responsibility of the DOT.

What actually took place, however, was more complicated. Over the next few decades the relationships among orders of government and between governments and the private sector would become even more entangled and at times confrontational because of the development pressures of suburbanization in Peel and Metro Toronto. The remainder of this paper examines how the airport was managed, developed, and operated within the dense web of jurisdictional power, stakeholder interests, and economic change as the farmland around Malton became the centre of Canada's largest metropolitan region.

3. Entering the Jet Age: Global Needs and Local Concerns

The transition of the airport into direct federal control in 1958 marked a major change in its governance. At the same time, two other changes would have even greater direct impact on the airport: the introduction of jet aircraft to regular service in North America and the rapid growth and development of the Toronto region, in particular present-day Brampton, Etobicoke, and Mississauga. When the DOT unveiled a plan for a new jet-age airport at Malton, the resulting web of negotiations and conflict with officials, residents, and businesses in the surrounding municipalities and with provincial authorities highlighted the multi-scalar tensions at Malton.

This section examines how these conflicts were navigated by government and non-governmental actors in a range of jurisdictions and sectors. The first and most crucial challenge to the local-national relationship came over land use planning and zoning around the airport. The ensuing period was characterized by the DOT's desire to build the airport according to its own plans without involving local officials.

3.1 *Administrative and demographic change around the airport*

When the airport was built in 1937, it was surrounded by Peel County farmland and the Village of Malton. Manufacturing and aviation service businesses grew along with the airport throughout the Second World War, and by the 1950s, the manufacturing firms around the airport and its proximity to Toronto made it a magnet for new residents.

In the years immediately after the war, the population of Toronto Township boomed – growing by more than 100 percent between 1941 and 1951 (Statistics Canada 1951). This growth in population was accompanied by growth in housing, industrial, and infrastructure construction in the region.

As Toronto Township (present-day Mississauga), which included the Village of Malton, grew, the Province of Ontario began to make changes to the governance of development around the airport.⁶ Beginning in 1946, the Province passed the *Planning Act* and a series of legislative amendments that gave local officials powers to develop official land use plans, including the subdivision of land and zoning, with Provincial approval from the Ministry of Urban Affairs.

Through the *Planning Act*, the Province created the Toronto and Suburban Planning Board, which was responsible for the orderly planning of Toronto and the

6. The administration of the region around the airport was complex. The entire area including and bordering the airport had been part of Peel County since 1867, and before that had been part of York County, which also included Toronto. Most of the area around the airport, including the Village of Malton, was part of the Township of Toronto, established in 1850. Malton had been a Police Village since 1914, giving it some level of self-government. Also closely bordering the airport was the Township of Toronto Gore, which was split into two parts and apportioned to Toronto Township and Chinguacousy Township in 1950.

adjacent areas of Toronto Township. The creation of the Board was accompanied by changes to the *Ontario Municipal Act*, which outlines the powers and responsibilities of municipalities and sets their boundaries (see Filion 1999; White 2007, 2016). The changes had the effect of more clearly outlining the responsibilities and expanding the powers of Toronto Township, which in 1950 gained acres of land near the airport with its amalgamation of part of Toronto Gore Township. This was a complex web of jurisdictional power and responsibility (see Table 1).

Table 1: Breakdown of jurisdictional responsibilities

Level	Body	Responsibilities
Federal	Department of Transport	Airport operations and planning
		Aviation safety
Provincial	Ministry of Urban Affairs	Approving municipal land use plans
		Drafting land use plan frameworks
	Ministry of Transportation	Highway construction and maintenance
Upper-tier municipal	Metropolitan Toronto Peel County/Region	Land use planning
		Roadway construction and maintenance
		Sewer and water construction and maintenance
Lower-tier municipal	Etobicoke Mississauga (Toronto Township) Brampton (Chinguacousy Township)	Land use planning
		Building permitting
		Zoning
		Roadway construction and maintenance

By the early 1950s, Toronto Township was a growing centre of residential and industrial development, largely in the area just north of the airport and south along the Lake Ontario shoreline. According to the planning regime in effect, Toronto Township planning officials would develop an official plan for the municipality, including the land around the airport. The Toronto and Suburban Planning Board, which in 1953 became the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board (MTPB) and included representatives from Toronto, Toronto Township, and other surrounding municipalities, would approve or suggest changes to the plan. Then the plan would be sent to the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs to be approved and made into law. Developers could apply for subdivision of lands under these plans and zoning bylaws with the local municipality. Any conflicts would be adjudicated at the Ontario Municipal Board, an arm's-length provincial tribunal.⁷

7. See Moore (2013) and White (2007, 2016) for more information on postwar planning and the Ontario Municipal Board in particular.

Within this demographic and administrative context, the DOT began plans to expand Malton Airport after the Second World War. As air travel surged, the importance of frequent connections between Toronto and the rest of Canada and the Northeastern United States had become clear. As the number of airlines in the United States continued to increase, Toronto's airport became increasingly important. The introduction of jets in the late 1950s intensified its importance.⁸ Meeting the demands of the jet age would require massive changes to the airport itself. The different agendas of the local planning apparatus and federal airport management would force a reckoning of sorts on governing the airport and the land around it (Edwards 2017).

3.2 *Land use conflicts in suburbanizing Malton*

While land use planning is typically the purview of municipalities, as granted by provinces, land use control around airports is another matter. Airports, as sites of multi-jurisdictional and extra-local concerns over aviation safety and operation, were seen as sites of exception, to be managed and developed according to the larger needs of the national aviation industry as whole.

The power of the federal government to control land use around airports comes originally from the *Aeronautics Act* of 1927, which allows the DOT to make regulations for air navigation in Canada. This includes, crucially, the right to make regulations “with respect to the height, use and location of buildings, structures and objects...situated on lands adjacent to or in the vicinity of airports” (*Roberts v The Queen* 1956, p. 1). In effect, as the Supreme Court ruled in 1956, the *Aeronautics Act* gave the DOT the power to zone land in Toronto Township.

In 1953, with plans for expanding the airport in the works and perhaps with an eye to the surrounding development pressures, Ottawa instituted the Toronto Malton Airport Zoning Regulations, using its powers under the *Aeronautics Act* to supersede local authority. These regulations affected more than 1,000 acres surrounding the airport through height and use restrictions. Existing structures contravening the regulations had to be removed or demolished. Moreover, the act forbade the operation of any machinery that would cause “by the emissions of light, smoke, noise or fumes, a hazard or obstruction to aircraft” (*Roberts v The Queen* 1956, p. 4). These zoning regulations not only limited the height of buildings in the area, but, crucially for manufacturing concerns, posed a significant threat to the development of industrial lands in the area.

Local property owners mounted a concerted opposition to the DOT's plan. Farm owners and a local development company made a claim of \$975,000 in damages against the DOT in 1954. The plaintiffs claimed that the 1953 zoning order had the effect of governing the land like a local bylaw and damaging the use

8. In 1958, the De Havilland Comet entered regular transatlantic service between the United Kingdom and North America. That same year, Boeing 707 became a fixture in North America (Bednarek 2016).

of their land. They claimed that the regulations were “so stringent that they deny all industry coming in and blight the land so that it is actually useless” (*Globe and Mail* 1954).

Different jurisdictions were at odds over land use planning around the airport. On the one hand, municipal and provincial officials responsible for land use planning, the preparation of an official plan, and the subdivision of lands had approved industrial development around the airport. On the other, federal officials had unilaterally placed a zoning ordinance on these lands that seemed to preclude much of the industrial activity local officials and developers wanted.

In fact, as the Supreme Court would find in 1956, the Airport Zoning Regulations had no real effect on the use of the land. Indeed, the Township's land use controls were more stringent than those issued by the federal government. It seemed what the developers were concerned about was not the land use controls *per se*, but rather the fear of future land use changes or airport expansion by an order of government in Ottawa with which they had no way of meaningfully interacting.

In the end, the court's ruling did little to clarify the issue of land use controls. The case established that there was no official relationship between the *Aeronautics Act* zoning and municipal land use plans and controls. Instead, municipal plans could be overridden by changes to *Aeronautics Act* as new technologies and flight routes became priorities for the DOT (*Roberts v the Queen* 1956). What were local officials to do about such a state of affairs, which introduced an unwelcome degree of uncertainty into the planning process?

Without official avenues to change the zoning around the airport, Toronto Township planners initiated informal discussions about the airport with DOT officials to get some degree of certainty about future plans. In 1954, H. S. Coblentz, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Toronto Township Planning Board, wrote to the Minister of Transport to urge the DOT to purchase the land around the airport to keep it non-active. In effect, this would take it out of the hands of local planners and make it a federal responsibility. Transport officials, on the other hand, responded that they did not require non-active use of the land but rather a restriction on height (Marler 1954, p. 1).

This disagreement would be a common theme in airport land use planning until the late 1950s. Local officials repeatedly asked the DOT to purchase the lands they zoned, thus removing them from local jurisdiction. Federal officials, however, were unwilling to take such a step. These types of disagreements intensified over the next decade.

3.3 *Malton's jet port*

As air travel expanded rapidly and the Toronto region's economy boomed, the airport began to experience growing pains.

Just as land speculators outside the airport boundaries tried to claim injuries from the airport, the airport began to suffer from its success as a development

magnet. The same year the zoning ordinance went into effect, the Toronto Board of Trade (BOT) called for a new highway to and from the airport. At times, business leaders claimed, the drive from downtown Toronto to the airport took as long as an hour and a half. In 1952, according to the airport's DOT managers, traffic congestion had forced the delay of 54 flights; by fall 1953, 32 flights had been delayed (*Globe and Mail* 1953). Mirroring the issue of height restrictions on local development, however, federal officials were unable to do anything about highways, which remained in the hands of Peel County, Toronto Township, or the Province of Ontario (depending on the road). Instead, federal officials focused on the redevelopment of the airport itself.

For DOT officials, other goals were driving their management of the airport, from the expansion of the national civil aviation system and airport network, to the success of TCA and the expansion of the aviation industry as a whole in Canada. As early as 1954, the DOT had laid out plans to spend at least \$22 million to "expand and modernize" the airport. This included the construction of a new terminal, additional office space, and expanded runways (*Globe and Mail* 1954a). The plan was part of a larger national strategy that included the modernization of Montréal's main airport.

As the DOT took ownership of the airport, it was given a new name, one that reflected its role in the wider region: Toronto International Airport. Construction of the new terminals began in 1955, and by 1957 was well under way with an expected opening date of 1963. The plan called for a new complex of terminal buildings and facilities about two kilometres from the existing terminal. To service jet planes, more property was acquired from neighbouring farms to accommodate buildings that reflected the expanded mission of the airport: "runways, taxi strips, aprons, obstruction free zones, highways, park lands, buildings, parking areas and the like" (Toronto International Airport 1957, p. 2).

More than just an expanded layout, the revamped airport became an architectural symbol of the jet age and Toronto, and by extension Canada's participation in it. As one magazine feature celebrated, "Flash Gordon never had it so good!" (Taylor 1958, p. 1). These kinds of expansions were not just aspirational, they were also necessary for the airport to avoid infrastructural inadequacy. In 1957, Toronto was the busiest of TCA's terminals, a key indicator of its popularity, with 455,964 passengers boarding TCA flights from Malton (*Globe and Mail* 1958). The new developments would triple the airport's capacity, enabling it to handle up to one aircraft every 90 seconds (*Re: Malton Airport and Surrounding Lands* 1958, p. 2). This was not only a massive increase from the previous era, but the introduction of frequent jet service brought new concerns to light.

As the jet port plan advanced, fissures between local and federal officials began to appear. These were most notable in the areas of noise and land use planning. The way these concerns would be handled indicated the ad hoc and semi-formal nature of the coalition of officials and private-sector players concerned with the

airport's development. Such a coalition would have no permanent institutional body and none of the relationships developed had their basis in legislation or official documents.

In spring 1958, a meeting between local and federal officials illustrated how these groups worked together. Present at the meeting were federal officials, including the DOT's construction engineers and the regional superintendent of airports, as well as the Defence Research Board's chiefs of sonics and the aircraft branch and a squadron leader from the Royal Canadian Air Force. Also present, though from a very different part of the federal bureaucracy, was the regional supervisor of Ontario for the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Members of local municipal governments, including the director of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board, Toronto Township's Planning Board, and Ontario officials from the Department of Planning and Development rounded out the attendees (*Re: Malton Airport and Surrounding Lands* 1958).

The purpose of the meeting was to "discuss prospective development of the Malton Airport, the impact of the airport on surrounding lands, and the possibility of further urban growth in proximity to the airport" (*Re: Malton Airport and Surrounding Lands* 1958, p. 1). For officials from the CMHC, local municipalities, and the province, the impact of the new airport on noise and the surrounding municipalities was quickly singled out as the most significant issue. Local planning officials again suggested that the DOT purchase buffer lands around the airport to ensure that there was no conflict between residential and airport land use arising from the increased noise of jets (*Re: Malton Airport and Surrounding Lands* 1958).

The noise issue was closely related to that of land use planning for surrounding municipalities. As the Toronto Township's Reeve put it in an interview with the *Globe and Mail*, the issue of airport noise affected land in a more than 30-kilometre radius. Such a large impact would have significant planning implications: "Much of the township zoning may be useless...and council and planning board may as well forget about future planning" (*Globe and Mail* 1958).

At the local scale, the issue of planning the airport forced municipal planning boards to come together to present a united front. In particular, the need to govern planning around the airport in a way that would both enable the functioning of the airport and allow suburban development was a key goal shared by the Toronto Township and the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board. They agreed to set up a meeting between the two planning departments to tackle, among other things, the effect of the airport on existing development, the future expansion of the airport, a land use policy, and studies of noise effects (Bacon 1958). Such inter-municipal cooperation would be a hallmark of the airport planning process.

For DOT officials, the noise issue was less important. They seemed ready to push through with the airport plan at all costs. Only two major concerns were

considered: “Maximum convenience for passengers and maximum efficiency for airlines’ aircraft handling” (Department of Transport 1958, p. 1). Despite this divergence between the groups’ interests, debate and discussions over the expansion project were characterized by an overwhelming desire among officials and business leaders to come to an agreement that would allow for both the growth of the airport and rapid suburbanization. After all, while the airport was a part of local politics in Toronto Township, for much of the rest of the metropolitan region, particularly the powerful political and business leaders in Toronto itself, the airport was key to regional economic growth and prestige. The question of reconciling multiple concerns – airport and aviation growth on the one hand and residential and industrial suburbanization on the other – was handled through a set of linkages, led not only by government officials, but also by business leaders who drove the creation of a shared set of goals for regional actors.

Business leaders, largely through the Metro Toronto BOT, helped foster cooperation and coordination between municipal and federal officials. Typical of business advocacy groups across North America, the BOT had been an active proponent of the airport since the 1930s. By the 1950s, at stake was both the success of the newly designed airport and the continued profitability and development of the western edge of the metropolitan region. In an effort to come to a plan that would achieve both goals, the BOT organized a committee to “ascertain the extent to which assistance might be given in co-ordinating the various interests that will be directly affected” (O’Neil 1958, p. 1).

Although federal officials were more reluctant to become involved in a coordinated land use planning effort, they were not completely opposed to the idea. They viewed such an arrangement’s efficacy as “enabling us to keep a finger on the pulse of public opinion...where we need advice and where the community has a problem” (Booth 1958, p. 1). However, their position as the most powerful player in the airport discussion was underscored by their unwillingness to enter into anything approaching a formal relationship with municipal officials.

As the Assistant Deputy Minister of Transport wrote, “I am inclined to be suspicious of self-appointed groups and I would not like to become committed until we had a better idea of the implications” (Booth 1958, p. 1). He concluded his advice to the Deputy Minister by stating, “I feel that we would be on safer ground if we were to run our business, always ensuring that there was proper consultation with local interests when, in our opinion, this was desirable” (Booth 1958, p. 2). Clearly, for federal officials, the aim was to maintain their role in the driver’s seat on anything related to airports.

Despite the lukewarm interest in coordination from the DOT, the BOT and its local government allies continued to push for coordinated road, infrastructure, and land use planning around the airport, which would require more information sharing and coordination from Ottawa. In a letter to the Minister of Transport (and Toronto MP) George H. Hees, they began by praising Transport’s plans for

Malton as providing Toronto “with an outstanding Airport facility” (Sheppard 1959, p. 1). They followed this praise with a list of concerns that were decidedly local in jurisdiction: the need for highway services and adequate water and sewage infrastructure. Recognizing that these were local or provincial responsibilities, they nevertheless pressed the federal government to begin negotiations for their provision with the relevant authorities. Finally, they urged the DOT to consider the implications of jet noise and to form a development policy around land use (Sheppard 1959, p. 3). Such suggestions, while in line with the concerns of local officials, were couched in language that put the airport first. Moreover, they recognized the power the federal government had over airport issues, urging them to take the first step. It was clear that local actors understood the stakes and the need to move in ways which were outside normal jurisdictional boundaries and processes.

In response, Minister Hees avowed that he shared the BOT’s views on “co-operating with the surrounding communities and provincial authorities” (Hees 1959, p. 1). He explained that the DOT had already come to an informal arrangement with local authorities to coordinate work on sewers as part of the expansion project. Such an arrangement existed outside any official channels. Instead, it reflected the relationships that had to be made on the ground, on an ad hoc basis, for the airport to continue to function. While on paper there was no requirement to consult, the exigencies of development demanded just these kinds of informal relationships.

The BOT continued to play a key role as go-between for federal, provincial, and municipal officials. Clearly wary of initiating official requests that would involve going on the record, and therefore slowing down response times, the DOT even went so far as to request the BOT to intervene with local officials at times on issues such as road and sewer planning, indicating that there were certain difficulties in the way of clear communication between local and federal officials about the airport.

Unwilling to enter into any official, legislated agreements with lower-level governments, DOT officials nevertheless faced challenges, such as noise, that would require inter-jurisdictional cooperation. As one article put it, since the “shadow of the big jets has fallen on Metro’s northwest,” something would have to be done. Otherwise, “life will be uncomfortable for thousands of families in Etobicoke, Weston, North York, Toronto Township, Brampton, and Chinguacousy Township” (Westall 1960). This type of pressure prompted officials to make a concerted effort to talk to each other outside official channels to come to a satisfactory agreement.

Out of these early discussions came some first attempts at an unofficial, yet quasi-institutionalized, working group of federal, municipal, and provincial civil servants to govern the airport and the land around it in a more coordinated fashion. Such a group would not be defined in legislation nor have any official rules for how to conduct business. Instead, it would be a flexible and responsive body

able to provide advice that would then be acted upon unilaterally by the officials responsible.

Beginning in July 1959, the Community Planning Branch of Ontario's Ministry of Urban Affairs and Housing set up a meeting of officials from municipalities, planning boards, and the DOT. At the meeting, the DOT admitted that it had not "concerned itself with the effect of aircraft noise on built-up areas around Malton Airport" (Bain 1959, p. 1). To tackle the issue effectively would require a suite of development control bylaws from local municipalities and aircraft operational rules from airport managers. Doing so would involve coordination between these two levels that had not been seen before.

The working group that brought together the Province, the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board, Toronto Township, Etobicoke, Brampton, and Chinguacousy became known as the Malton Sound Study Committee (MSSC). It conducted its own sound studies in consultation with the federal government (Taylor 1959a). By September 1959, local planning officials were actively involved in proposing aircraft noise mitigation devices for airplanes, outlining noise contours across the region, and liaising with federal officials in Canada and airport authorities in the United States (Taylor 1959b). Clearly, the mobilization of local officials had forced them to create a new set of unofficial responsibilities and capacities enabling them to plan the airport area, albeit with little official weight behind their efforts.

With their newfound expertise on the effect of airport noise on residential development, local officials formulated a plan to work with federal officials. They suggested alternatives, such as scheduling and preferential runway management, that would allow for the expansion of Malton and the suburban development around it (Bacon 1959, pp. 1–2). Without power to change anything about the airport, they instead relied on the dense web of connections they had built among themselves and experts in other parts of the federal government. Using evidence from the United States, MSSC warned Ottawa that unless something was done to mitigate noise, "strong community pressures will be developed which will seriously reduce the ability of Malton to accommodate air traffic in the future" (Malton Sound Study Committee 1959, p. 2). For their part, the local officials suggested they review their own policies for the airport to minimize residential development, and therefore community opposition to the airport.

The effects of this coalition-building among local players in the early 1960s appear, at first glance, to be mixed. Local officials and the BOT continued to lobby Ottawa for increased input on the airport, largely in private communications. Nevertheless, the DOT, at least at first, appeared to maintain its original, more aloof stance based on its ultimate jurisdictional power over the airport. Within the organization, however, staff were worried about the effect that local opposition, and their own response to it, would have on their national airport plan, which included similar developments in Montréal and new airports across Western Canada.

Despite the clear difference in mission and goals between the DOT and local officials, the continued attempts at relationship-building had begun to bear some fruit by the early 1960s with a noticeable shift in the public tone of airport officials. By the end of 1960, the DOT, for the first time, began to explicitly take noise considerations into account in its redesign of the airport. Reflecting the work of the MSSC, DOT officials began to rethink the runway configuration they had proposed for the jet port. Instead of a new runway that would put planes immediately over Bramalea during their initial (and very noisy) takeoff, they proposed an extension of a different runway, which would take planes over largely undeveloped farmland to the west of the airport (Baldwin 1960, p. 4). This change was followed by other proposed changes to mitigate effects on the surrounding area.

In a letter to the MSSC, Deputy Minister of Transport J. R. Baldwin outlined the range of actions the department was taking and how the DOT could work with local officials. While he maintained that airport officials would be using their own sound studies, those studies agreed with many of the MSSC conclusions. Baldwin ended his letter by saying that he and his colleagues would happily meet at any time to discuss “problems that you may have resulting from aircraft operations at Malton” (Baldwin 1960, p. 4).

The meeting took place three days later, with officials from the DOT, including the Minister (Hees), the Reeves of Toronto Township and Chinguacousy, and other local officials. There, Hees made clear, for the first time, that the new development of the airport would explicitly be carried out with an eye to the neighbours. “We are going to build runways in positions that will cause the least harm to people” (Notes of a Meeting Held in the Toronto Flying Club 1960, p. 1). He even went so far as to invite ratepayer groups to future meetings.

The level of coordination and cooperation among local, provincial, and DOT officials would continue to grow over the next several years as construction on the new Toronto International Airport progressed. It did so along the same lines of informal communication between parties that the MSSC had initiated, and with many of the same players.

Toronto Township, for instance, began its plans for the Malton area by working with DOT authorities to determine, unofficially, which lands would likely be expropriated for runway expansion over the next several years (Bacon 1960). While zoning and other issues continued to crop up between Toronto Township and the airport, it appeared that communication was now much more open and constant. Meetings with Township officials and airport managers were held throughout the period, and Township officials in particular saw the relationship as one of coordination and cooperation. As Reeve Robert Speck noted, “This airport is a big taxpayer in the Township of Toronto, and I think it is our duty and responsibility to start this off and meet with the DOT” (Toronto Township, 1961, p. 17).

When Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson officially opened the completed Toronto International Airport in 1964, he lauded the cooperative work that had gone into it:

In this airport...we have a fine example of the kind of constructive, broad-based co-operation between the federal Department of Transport, between the provincial authorities who are concerned with this building, the Toronto Metropolitan Commission, the Cities of Toronto and Hamilton, the Town of Malton, and the Townships of Etobicoke and Toronto (Pearson 1964, p. 4).

Throughout this period, it was clear that the informal relationships established among local and provincial officials and between them and their federal counterparts relied as much on informal communication and power-brokering by the BOT and other third parties. Reluctant to involve themselves in official relationships because of fears of being committed to agreements that could become outdated in the rapidly suburbanizing and changing area, all parties nevertheless communicated and negotiated with one another informally.

What changed during the period was the growth in the power of local officials, and in particular the power of their ad hoc committee, the MSSC, to influence federal officials. By the time the new airport opened in 1964, an informal network had been established for planning the airport and the communities around it. However, demographic and development pressures throughout the 1960s, and increases in civil aviation travel nationally and internationally meant that this new network's efficacy would be severely tested. This period would culminate in the push for a further expansion of the airport in 1966. The resulting conflict would strain existing connections and force officials at all levels to reconfigure their relationships with one another, especially within the context of a push for regionalized planning in Southern Ontario.

4. Expansion and Reconfiguration: The 1968 Plan and its Aftermath

Beginning in 1966, the good-neighbour practices that had begun to develop around the airport and its adjacent communities were put to the test. That year, the DOT began to plan for another ambitious expansion of Toronto International Airport. The DOT called for the expansion of the airport's limits well beyond its current envelope and the construction of a new terminal, new runways, and other infrastructure improvements it deemed necessary to meet the aviation needs of the Toronto region into the 1990s.

The plans, made official in 1968, met with strong opposition from local governments. While the DOT maintained that its plans were not only necessary but reasonable, it ultimately modified them, proposing a smaller reconfiguration and expansion plan largely within the existing airport envelope. To meet future needs, they agreed to study the construction of another airport in the Greater Toronto Region, which eventually became the Pickering Airport Plan. These events took place in the context of increased provincial efforts at regional planning, which culminated in the early 1970s Toronto-Centred Region Plan.

This section explores the decision of the federal government to halt major expansion, despite its legal power to push plans through. Existing planning and

information-sharing for the airport established in the 1950s had changed to such an extent that the federal government was now acting as a partner with local municipalities, rather than as the most powerful actor in the room. The response to the 1968 plan demonstrates how the informal networks established in the 1950s became a powerful institution for change and the governance of the airport within a regional context.

4.1 The plan itself

The 1968 expansion plan came out of a complex configuration of federal politics, local needs, and aviation industry interests, but represented national-scale priorities most directly. Just three years after the completion of the last redevelopment, the DOT disclosed its plans for a \$50-million expansion at Toronto International Airport to be completed by 1972. The plan, which was not yet finalized, would include new terminal arrangements, parking structures, and customs halls to handle the annual 15 percent growth in traffic in preparation for what the Air Transport Association (an industry group) was suggesting would be a tenfold increase in air traffic by 1990 (Craig 1966).

The plan itself represented the first large-scale expansion of the airport complex into the surrounding region in more than a decade. Like the 1958 jet port, the 1968 expansion plan was meant to increase jet traffic in and out of Toronto International. Unlike the 1958 plan, however, the 1968 plan also involved the expansion of the airport's boundaries far into suburban land. In light of the new plans, local officials sought new rounds of meetings with federal officials.

At the same time, provincial efforts at regional planning, begun in the late 1960s, would mean a much more direct role for Ontario officials (White 2007), reflecting a much greater involvement in the planning process by provincial officials during this period and an eagerness to capitalize on the role of airports as generators of suburban growth.

Discussions over the 1968 plan drew on the existing networks established during the noise debates of the 1950s. In the airport coalition of municipal and provincial officials and private-sector players in particular, concerns over the new airport plans and their role in the regional economic development of Southern Ontario provoked a rapid response. One of the arms of the coalition, an unofficial committee called the "Aviation Service Committee," was made up of representatives from private-sector groups such as the BOT, the Convention Bureau, the Canadian Manufacturers Association, quasi-public bodies like the Redevelopment Advisory Council and the Metro Toronto Industrial Commission, and government agencies such as the provincial Department of Trade and Commerce, the Department of Tourism and Information, and the THC. It also included the chairman of Metro Toronto, William Allen. None of these groups communicated directly with the Minister of Transport, and instead relied on members of the private sector to make connections, a telling feature of the ad hoc governance structure of the airport and the land around it in 1960s Toronto (Jones 1967).

The concerns of the Aviation Service Committee mirrored those of earlier groups that had worked to shape the 1958 jet port plans. The committee's purpose was to ensure they were communicating local and regional needs to the DOT. This approach reflected the broader regionalist thinking that had come to characterize provincial planning efforts (White 2007). In particular, the committee asked for a reconsideration of citizen group participation at DOT meetings about airport expansion. This echoed similar increases in citizen involvement in infrastructure and urban planning elsewhere in Ontario (Lombardo 2020). The planning of the 1968 expansion would reflect the changing nature of planning in Ontario, which was becoming more participatory and regional in scope.

While the private sector and Metro Toronto officials welcomed the growth of airport traffic that such a plan represented, local officials balked at the uncertainty it brought to development immediately surrounding the airport. Peel County's municipalities, especially the former Toronto Township, now the Town of Mississauga, objected to the apparent decision of the DOT to expand beyond the airport envelope of the time. Not only would this expansion make Mississauga lose tens of thousands of acres of taxable land, but it would turn all the area around the airport into potential sites of expropriation, putting a chill on development.

In a letter to Minister of Transport Paul Hellyer, who was also a Toronto-area MP, members of Mississauga Council asked for clarification of the status of the lands west of the airport, including Dixie Road, in light of Mississauga's hesitation to suggest that industry should locate in the area. As the Mayor wrote, "We are of course, most reluctant to expand further municipal funds for services which we may or [may] not be able to put to the intended use" (Town of Mississauga 1968, p. 2). In neighbouring Brampton, fears over the airport expansion put a chill on plans to develop a major planned community in Bramalea (*Globe and Mail* 1967). It was clear that the airport expansion was again drawing the DOT and local municipalities into conflict.

The difference between local responses to the airport plans in 1958 and those in 1968 largely reflect the vastly different political economic geographies of the period. Whereas in 1958 the issue of development and its effect on the airport (and vice versa) was in many cases theoretical, by 1968, these issues were real. The area around the airport had grown considerably in terms of population and density (see Figures 1 and 2). At the same time, the 1968 debate centred on many of the same issues, notably noise and land use planning. However, by 1968, this debate took place in a framework of broad agreement about the relative importance of the airport to the economic and development health of the region's local communities. More capacity was needed to ensure the continual growth of the airport and its role as development magnet, but it would have to be done in a way that did not damage the development potential and residential life of the region's northwest corner, including parts of Brampton, Etobicoke, and Mississauga.

Figure 1: Toronto's airport and built-up areas, 1954

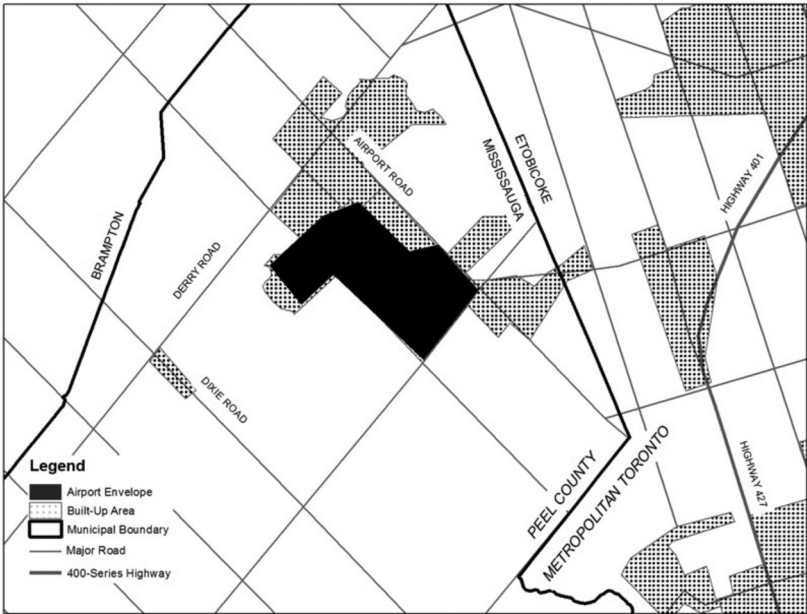
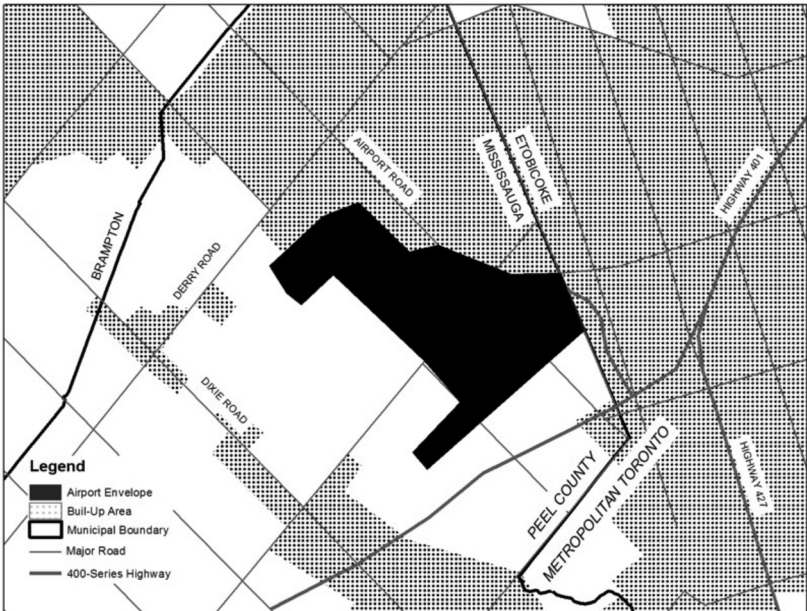


Figure 2: Toronto's airport and built-up areas, 1970



This position was widely held by officials. In the provincial legislature, Leonard Braithwaite, MPP for Etobicoke, told fellow legislators:

The growth of air traffic will confer immense material benefits on large numbers of people spread over quite a wide area of Western Metropolitan Toronto, Mississauga and vicinity. At the same time, it is not too much to say that the noise will ruin the very lives of those of my constituents and others who happen to live along certain narrow lanes that are the extensions of the runways and proposed new runways and extensions of Toronto Airport at its present Malton location (Braithwaite 1968, p. 3).

The solution to the issue, according to Braithwaite, was more official sharing of responsibilities around the airport:

The day is long past in Canada when we can draw a hard and fast line between Federal and Provincial areas of responsibility. These are my constituents who are affected, and they have a right to hear my voice raised on their behalf. Even without formal representations of any kind coming from the Legislature, the mere fact that this speech is on the record in the Provincial Throne Debate will surely mean that Ottawa cannot but acknowledge the presence, and indeed the concern of this House (Braithwaite 1968, p. 15).

It is important to note, however, that the DOT had no statutory responsibility to manage the airport in any respect other than safety as regards local communities. However, the fact that every riding adjacent to the airport was held by the governing Liberal party, along with much of the rest of the Toronto region (Government of Canada 1968) may have affected federal decisions. Indeed, local Liberal MPs had, by the end of 1968, begun a campaign to persuade Minister Hellyer to choose another site for the airport (*Globe and Mail* 1968).

Even before they did so, it was clear that the DOT was considering the surrounding community in several ways in its expansion plans. The Toronto International Master Plan Report, prepared by outside consultants for the DOT, called for the purchase of 3,000 acres to construct new parallel runways. This included land west of Dixie Road, which would have meant closing the road and making that area, zoned as potential industrial sites by Mississauga, useless for that purpose.

While the plan attempted to minimize noise by directing the north-south runways and resultant flight paths away from Brampton and Bramalea, it would clearly have a significant impact on the area. When the government's own Civil Aviation Department presented its plans for runway configuration, its report critiqued this expansion plan. Instead, it called for new runways to be built closer together, thus eliminating the need to expand beyond Dixie Road. As well, the new runways that could go directly over Brampton or Bramalea would be largely limited to quieter, smaller planes, rather than jumbo jets (Civil Aviation Branch 1968).

Ottawa's airport planners were taking their unofficial responsibility to be good neighbours at least somewhat seriously. This was backed up by a formal announcement by the Minister of Transport, Paul Hellyer, about planning for the Toronto airport. In order to satisfy the growth of air traffic in the city, he said in a press release:

Further decisions can be taken only after consultation covering such matters as the willingness of provincial and municipal authorities to cooperate in the matter of zoning of construction in areas around the airports, and adequate planning of ground transportation facilities and similar matters (Hellyer 1968a, p. 1).

Given this explicit recognition of the two-way relationship for airport planning that had sprung up since the 1950s, the entreaties by private-sector and local groups began to grow. Local residents began letter-writing campaigns to Hellyer to protest the expansion (Whelan 1968, p. 1). Mississauga officials were particularly vocal in their opposition, claiming that it would be incompatible with existing municipal plans. In one report, the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board wrote:

It must be recognized that the existing airport and the ground transportation facilities serving that airport contribute substantially to the economy of the Metropolitan area and southern Ontario. Certain expansion of the airport must be proceeded with as there is no alternative solution... The accommodation of these demands is essential to the economic well-being of the Metropolitan region notwithstanding the existing and, to a certain extent, inevitable conflicts between aircraft operations and the amenities of the existing residential communities (Wronski 1968, p. 5).

However, the Board continued, any expansion should be done in consultation with local planning boards.

Soon after Minister Hellyer released his statement about the airport expansion, the DOT began a series of meetings that promoted mutual cooperation among all levels of government. These meetings were held explicitly to "determine the viability of the expansion" based on zoning and planning issues (Baldwin 1968, p.1). Between September 9 and November 19, 1968, eight meetings were held.

While the first meeting was held only to "inform" lower-level governments of the plans, the second took a significant step towards creating a more institutionalized multi-jurisdictional apparatus to deal with airport planning. On September 30, federal, provincial, and municipal officials met to "set up the organization to deal with the problem" of the airport and its surrounding areas as a whole (Baldwin 1968, p. 1-2).

Such a move was unprecedented. When, in the 1950s, lower-level jurisdictions had come together on their own to create an airport-centred governance coalition, the DOT had not been involved. In 1968, however, this new airport governance

coalition involved seemingly back-and-forth, multi-jurisdictional discussions among governments at all three levels.

The ad hoc federal–provincial–municipal organization created to plan and govern the airport began a series of meetings to discuss land use compatibility. They expanded the parties involved to include discussions with local MPs, the BOT, the Urban Planning and Development Committee, the Toronto Area Redevelopment Advisory Council, and Etobicoke City Council. Technical meetings on land use included planners from Brampton, Chinguacousy, Etobicoke, Mississauga, and Streetsville. The conclusion that came from these meetings reflected the concerns of these local communities: it would not be possible to reach the level of land use compatibility that the Minister of Transport desired (Baldwin 1968, p. 3). It seemed massive expansion at Malton had been stymied by local concerns.

These discussions were more than just informational. This quasi-formal coalition of municipal, provincial, and federal officials and planners was actively involved in planning the airport in a way that did not reflect the airport's official and statutory position within federal jurisdiction. As J. R. Baldwin, Deputy Minister of Transport, wrote, these discussions left the DOT two options: to build the airport despite local opposition or to build a new airport somewhere else. Baldwin recommended that official positions by all governments involved be placed on the record. If, as was likely, these positions opposed the full expansion of the airport, then the federal government should immediately announce its plan for a second airport, expand Malton in a limited capacity, and continue to operate the Mississauga-based airport into the foreseeable future (Baldwin 1968).

4.2 Reconfiguration and the development of a regional plan around the airport

In December 1968, the Minister of Transport announced the cancellation of the full expansion at Toronto International, because “the condition of land use compatibility cannot be satisfied” (Hellyer 1968b, p. 1). Mississauga's planners and other officials, concerned about the need to mark a huge swath of that city's northeast as solely industrial due to the airport's expansion, had seemingly forced the federal government to make a significant change to its plans (Speck 1968b, p. 2). Instead of expanding the airport at Malton, the DOT announced a new airport was to be built.

To this end, a “joint federal-provincial government committee will be established to study alternative sites for future expansion to serve the Southern Ontario region” (Hellyer 1968b, p. 3). This significant move would have a substantial impact on the regional development of the Toronto metropolitan area, particularly crucial for the regional planning of Southern Ontario that was beginning to dominate discussions from the 1970s onward.

Indeed, a second airport became a key feature of regional plans like Ontario's Toronto Centred Region plan from the 1970s onward. This plan sought to manage growth in Ontario by organizing new development around a few important infrastructure hubs, like airports, spread along Lake Ontario from Oshawa in the

east to Hamilton in the west. Both the existing airport in Malton and the proposed new airport elsewhere in the region would be important anchors of new growth under this plan.

As provincial officials stepped in to issue land use plans for the region directly, a new airport was seen as a key anchor for managing urban growth. While in the 1950s municipalities were taking the lead, this new regional planning paradigm that emerged in the 1970s saw the province become a key player (see Frisken 2007, pp. 103–42). No longer an imposition on lower-level governments, the benefits of airport location, long recognized by local officials, would be at least partly in their control.

In the end, the DOT decided to limit expansion at Malton. This included runway extensions, new taxiways, and a new parallel runway to be completed by 1971 (Department of Transport 1968, p. 30). A new passenger terminal and runway improvements capable of handling jumbo jets would be part of the new plan, which would cost \$60 million over two years (Gillies 1968, p. 5). The improvements would largely be included in the existing airport envelope, with an expansion just west to Dixie Road. It is this configuration that, despite fears the airport would not be able to keep up with traffic into the 1980s, continues to operate today, albeit in a modified and slightly expanded form.

Even this limited expansion, however, prompted changes to the provincial rules for land use planning. The situation at the airport echoed other forays of the province into local infrastructure planning, most notably the decision in 1976 to cancel the Spadina Expressway in Toronto (Lombardo 2020; White 2011). Local groups attempted to meet the needs of the airport as much as DOT officials changed to meet local requirements. In particular, municipal planners and officials from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs made the first attempt by any jurisdiction in North America to “ensure that the utilization of lands in the vicinity of an airport is compatible with the high noise levels generated by aircraft operations” (McKeough 1969, p. 1). The result was a land use regime that encouraged the development of uses that would not lead to increased complaints or conflicts with airport uses. Clearly, given their power to shape where the airport would expand, local officials were now better able to plan and develop for the airport itself.

The discussions that eventually led to the search for a new airport and the limited expansion of Malton are examples of the effectiveness that locally based, relatively informal coalitions can have on shaping regional planning more broadly. While Malton’s limited expansion did go ahead, a federal-provincial task force was formed in the early 1970s to choose a site for a new airport. Given the name Toronto II, the new airport was needed, claimed planners, to meet the needs of the growing international aviation industry. The search began with 59 sites, later narrowed to four, all of which were rejected by the joint committee. The two levels of government reframed their search and chose a site for a new airport on the east side of the metropolitan region in Pickering, not to replace Malton, but to complement it (Ontario Government and the Pickering Airport Site 1972).

The search for a regional site, while driven by federal decisions about airports, was a key component of the creation of the Toronto Centred Region Plan. This plan was part of a wider regional planning initiative begun by the Ontario government. Such a plan saw major infrastructure sites, like the airport in Pickering, as key to the management of growth along Lake Ontario (White 2007). This new, regional perspective also saw the Ontario government step into the planning process in a much more direct way than before. While in the previous era, the Province was limited to a guidance and approval role, the post-1970s planning regime was driven by plan-making by the Province itself (Lombardo 2020). This was a crucial context for the development of an alternative site for the new airport within the wider multi-jurisdictional plan.

The decision to create a new airport in Pickering was immediately controversial. Local residents of the largely undeveloped and rapidly suburbanizing area came together to oppose it, citing the same fears of airport noise, pollution, and traffic that had arisen in 1950s Malton. In the end, the federal government convened an airport inquiry commission to determine the best course of action.

At hearing after hearing throughout the region, local residents, planners, and others spoke out, largely in opposition to the new airport (Airport Inquiry Commission Hearing 1974). Despite provincial support for the airport, the DOT put the plan on hold. Indeed, the plan for a Pickering Airport continues to be an issue in the eastern part of the Toronto metropolitan region (Rowan 2017). The controversy over Pickering demonstrates the significant change in federal–provincial–municipal relations around airports and regional planning since the 1950s. Local concerns remain key drivers of federal airport planning decisions.

In Malton, on the other hand, the airport continued to function and grow largely within its existing footprint without much controversy. The enduring legacy of the airport development coalition that arose out of the 1960s was a fairly robust set of relationships that allowed for complementary development of the airport and the land around it through information-sharing. With new provincial zoning regimes in place and local official plans reflecting the important place of the airport in regional development, the previous era’s work bore fruit. By the end of the 1970s, the area around the airport became one of the most important employment and transportation zones in the metropolitan region.

The decision to limit expansion at Malton was in line with the DOT’s desire to be a good neighbour in the Toronto region. The way officials from various governments had worked together was a sign of what could be achieved with a focused institutional governance involving representatives from across the region. Such was the perceived success of this approach that one government backbencher, the Liberal MP for Etobicoke, Alastair Gillespie, proposed a new formal institution that involved all four levels of government; this “metropolitan regional airport board” would have powers that “would be advisory, not executive” (Gillespie 1969). Despite the apparent success of the Toronto approach, however, it was more than

20 years before the government officially considered changes to the governance structure of the airport.

Things had clearly changed since the early 1950s in the relationship between municipalities and the federal government. In particular, there was a clear recognition of a local role in the airport planning process. Moreover, a consensus among all levels of government as well as the private sector had emerged about the need not only to expand airport traffic, but also to do it in a way that complemented local development. What remains striking in the 1960 expansion process is just how effective this loose affiliation of officials from municipal, provincial, and federal governments was at shaping the airport and the land around it – and in particular in stopping the airport expansion.

On the surface, these parties had wildly different goals, even among themselves. Mississauga, for instance, had a vested interest not just in the expansion of the airport for its potential to attract development and therefore increase property tax income, but also in limiting that expansion in certain directions for the purposes of its planning. Etobicoke and Brampton, on the other hand, which did not get many of the direct benefits of development from the airport, were most concerned with limiting the airport to protect residential development. Between different jurisdictional levels, the issue was even more divisive. The goal of the Canadian Air Transportation Administration was to increase capacity to benefit the Canada's national air routes, of which Toronto was a central node. Moreover, the federal government had the authority to carry out not just expansion but also expropriation and other related activities without the support of lower-level governments.

In the end, however, the DOT, municipalities, and the Province decided on a plan that allowed for airport expansion and increased capacity, along with a land use regime around the airport that would allow for the development of industrial, commercial, and residential areas in ways in that would minimize conflict over noise and air traffic. The plan involved little to no official statutory relations among municipalities, or with the federal government. Instead, a quasi-formal network of private-sector advisors, including industry and property developers, municipal and provincial planners, and federal engineers, worked together through a series of meetings to produce the present state of affairs.

Building on their proven success over the noise control issues of the late 1950s, municipal and provincial officials worked together across municipal boundaries and jurisdictional overlaps to present a united front to the federal authorities. Leveraging the expertise and power of these lower-order government actors, DOT officials were able to plan an airport that would largely avoid massive opposition and protests. The story of the 1968 expansion and its changes is one that demonstrates the role of airports as key sites of multi-jurisdictional governance and innovation. This reflected changing relationships between the airport and surrounding municipalities, as well as the priorities of both parties. This was all framed by a consensus on airports that had been building since the 1950s.

4.3 *The airport today*

Traffic at Toronto International Airport, renamed Lester B. Pearson Toronto International Airport in 1984, continued to grow throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Despite this growth, no significant change was carried out to the management of the airport and its relationship to surrounding land, and things largely continued with limited conflict between the local and federal governments.

In 1987, however, the federal government put forth a new policy that would allow “provincial, regional or local authorities to manage and operate airports” (Chong, 2017, p. 2). In 1994 Ottawa released its “National Airports Policy,” which allowed for the transfer of airports to not-for-profit “Canadian Airport Authorities” (Chong, 2017, p. 2). Under this policy, the institutional governance of the airport formally changed.

On December 2, 1996, the DOT officially transferred the airport to the control of the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA), a non-profit airport authority, in a 60-year lease. The lease gave the GTAA full control over virtually every aspect of the airport and defined the GTAA as “representative of the local community,” requiring the creation of a “community consultative committee” (Ground Lease 1996, pp. 146–47). The governance of the airport through the GTAA reflects much of that informal coalition that emerged in the 1950s to govern not just the airport, but the area around it.

Today, the GTAA has a board of 15 directors, the members of which come from the groups that have made up the airport coalition since the 1950s. Seven directors are elected from the community, with nomination input from, among others, the Boards of Trade of Brampton, Mississauga, and Toronto. Five of the remaining directors are nominated by the municipalities around the airport and in the Greater Toronto Area: Durham, Halton, Peel, Toronto, and York. Rounding out the group are directors nominated by the federal and provincial governments (GTAA 2020). In many ways, the contemporary situation at the airport reflects an institutionalization of the kinds of networked and largely informal connections developed and leveraged throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

Since the 1970s, Toronto’s Pearson International Airport has become the busiest in Canada. In 2018, 49.5 million passengers passed through the airport, which handled more than 550,000 tonnes of cargo. At the same time, the area adjacent to the airport, in the cities of Mississauga, Brampton, and Toronto, is the second-largest employment zone in the country, with more than 50,000 jobs linked to the airport (GTAA 2020). With significant concentrations of manufacturing and warehousing, along with business service and financial offices, the area around Pearson has become a magnet for economic development that continues today (Blais 2016).

Indeed, the power of Pearson International Airport as an anchor for economic development is such that the airport features prominently in City of Mississauga promotional material, which advertises “Our Airport” as a catalyst

for the community that “provides links to global markets while fostering trade, investment and tourism” (City of Mississauga 2020). With more than 330,000 jobs in the airport employment zone, there can be little doubt that Pearson has driven economic development in Mississauga, Brampton, and Toronto.

5. Lessons for multi-jurisdictional collaboration

The findings from this research point to three key lessons for functional jurisdictional planning and collaboration on large-scale infrastructure projects. First, there need to be shared goals among governments at every level and partners in the private sector. Second, regional governance can successfully occur through pressure from the bottom of the jurisdictional hierarchy, originating with municipal officials, even without formal mechanisms for trilateral relationships and cooperation. Third, context matters. Local officials and advocates were successful in part because of their ability to leverage favourable political and economic trends in the area, and powerful private-sector voices, to create what is, today, Canada’s busiest airport and second-largest employment zone.

5.1 Shared goals

As we saw above, the shared prosperity of airport and surrounding regions was a key common goal that emerged among local and national officials after the 1950s. When the most severe moments of disjuncture occurred with respect to the 1958 Toronto International plan, it reflected the lack of a shared agenda for how the airport fit into plans for regional growth. Once Toronto Township began to plan for the airport as a significant site of economic development within its borders and as part of the larger region, and the DOT began to see the success of the surrounding region as crucial to the airport’s continued growth, a shared understanding framed the multi-lateral discussions.

This shared agenda is clear not just from the comments of officials, but from the tone and tenor of their efforts. Moreover, these goals were regional, rather than local. Instead of focusing on the industrial or residential growth of Mississauga as an isolated phenomenon, for instance, leaders saw it as part of a shared regional economic growth anchored on the airport. Such regional thinking among leaders was increasingly widespread from the 1960s onward (Frissen 2007; White 2007). An understanding of the need for regional-scale cooperation and planning for the continued success of Toronto was echoed by larger changes to the municipal governance of Ontario as new regional municipalities like Peel were created in the 1970s. That such a regional approach to planning would focus on the airport is not surprising.

Much of the regional nature of these shared goals can be attributed to the nature of airports.⁹ Operating an airport requires the cooperation of officials across jurisdictions and scale from the local and regional to the national. Indeed, this

9. See Addie (2014) on “aero-regionalism.”

fact is enshrined in the GTAA's governing documents, including its 2017 Master Plan, which, in stark contrast to the 1968 plan, includes sections on land uses and "interface with surrounding area plans" (GTAA 2017, p. 3).

Land use planning in the area surrounding airports matters as much to the success of the airport as the position and length of runways. At the same time, Pearson's global flight connections have helped drive economic development and make the area surrounding the airport one of the largest employment zones in North America. That the coordination necessary to make this work was carried out informally for the 1968 plan shows the power of focused, regional governance agendas to support cohesive, multi-jurisdictional plans.

5.2 Municipally led coalition building

Another aspect of the functional multi-jurisdictional planning and operation of the airport and the surrounding land was the municipally led nature of these coalitions.¹⁰ In the case of the 1958 airport plans, the Townships of Toronto and Brampton worked with officials in neighbouring Etobicoke, and with experts from the Provincial Ministry of Urban Affairs, to come up with a shared noise monitoring and abatement plan. Rather than wait for relevant legislation to enable such relationships, municipal officials on the ground worked quickly to effect change and build working relationships across jurisdictions and scales from Mississauga to Ottawa.

They did this despite the absence of official institutional bodies. Moreover, working together with the support, however informal, of the provincial government enabled them to approach the DOT as a united, regional-scale body. This cooperation was strong enough to pressure the federal government into action and shape the plans at the airport, despite the absence of legal requirements to do so on the part of the DOT. This governing relationship became more formalized in the discussions around the 1968 plans.

That such a multi-jurisdictional approach to managing the development of the airport and its neighbours emerged from municipalities reflects the leveraging of shared goals in action. Actors on the ground, from sanitation and traffic engineers to city councillors concerned about the negative effects of the 1958 plan or the 1960s expansions, were immediately aware of the need for two-way cooperation between municipalities and the airport. The use of ad hoc committees and established working relationships to informally shape the plan for the airport and its region was, in the case of Pearson, a successful first step toward more formal multi-jurisdictional governance of the airport. Such an approach, as others have suggested, has a great deal of potential for the governance of regions as a whole (Côté, Eidelman, and Fenn 2020; Harding 2020).

10. As Alan Harding has pointed in the case of Manchester, such endeavours have been successful in the management of that regional area also (Harding 2020).

5.3 Leveraging political and economic trends

The existence of shared regional goals and a municipally led approach might have come to nothing had it not been for two key trends that emerged in the 1960s. The first was the economic growth of the GTA, and its growing importance to the national economy. The second was the growing political influence of the Greater Toronto Region's local politicians, land developers, and other private-sector players. Within the GTA, the boom in residential and industrial demand in the western part of the region meant local officials in Brampton and Mississauga exerted considerable influence within regional networks that had previously been dominated by Toronto or Hamilton players. Nationally, the election of ruling-party MPs in the region allowed increasingly powerful local politicians and private-sector managers to directly lobby the federal government for changes to airport plans.

The history of the Toronto's Pearson International Airport and its relationship with its surrounding communities outlined here demonstrates the significance of airports as sites of regional governance and planning. Because they depend on multiple scales, from the local to the national, to function, airports are governed by a range of jurisdictions from the local to the international. As massive nodes in international networks of transportation infrastructure, they also have huge effects on the economies of their regions, land use in their communities, and global supply chains and logistics. In short, airports are significant sites of planning, conflict, and negotiation with heavy impacts on their local, regional, and national contexts.

6. Conclusion

When the airport was first built in the late 1930s, it required cooperation among local governments and the federal government because the City of Toronto owned the land on which the airport was to be built. As the scale of airport activity increased, and the suburbanization of Brampton, Etobicoke, and Mississauga proceeded, new conflicts over land use, noise, and transportation and other infrastructure cropped up. Complaints over noise threatened the efficient operation of the airport, and a lack of certainty around airport development led to difficulties with planning and developing the region. In response, local officials created a committee to make cross-jurisdictional decisions on noise and land use. The result was a strong, largely unified regional bloc that was able to exert pressure on the federal government to change the airport development plan.

By the late 1960s, the effects of earlier multi-jurisdictional attempts to plan around the airport had made cooperation among federal, municipal, and provincial authorities a necessary and even welcome component of airport planning on the part of the DOT. Federal officials could leverage existing local expertise and planning to develop an airport that would not only serve the region, but also grow with it. Such was the result of the conflict over the 1968 plans that federal, provincial, and municipal officials worked in concert to change plans for runway extensions and development in the airport itself, and the land use and zoning regimes surrounding it. Planning for and around the airport had, by the 1970s, become a truly regional, multi-jurisdictional endeavour.

The history of the airport and its surrounding region hints at the importance of large-scale infrastructure projects for focusing institutional power. In the end, the future of the airport and the region around it have become inextricably linked. As COVID-19 wreaks havoc on air travel and the GTAA in particular, it remains to be seen how the airport and its surrounding communities will work together, or not, to meet the challenges of this new era.

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Abbreviations:

ACRF: Airport Central Registry Files

AIC: Airport Inquiry Commission

DOT: Department of Transport

LAC: Library and Archives Canada

PAMA: Peel Art Museum and Archives

PDPF: Planning Department Project Files

TIA: Toronto International Airport

TTF: Toronto Township Fonds

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