



# TRANSPORT ACTION ONTARIO

(formerly Transport 2000 Ontario)

*Advocating for Sustainable Public and Freight Transportation*

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Mr. Howard Eng,  
President and Chief Executive officer,  
Greater Toronto Airports Authority,  
311 Convair Drive,  
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December 2nd 2015

Dear Mr. Eng,

## **Airline Passenger Growth Predictions and Ground-side Airport Access Issues**

As a public transportation, non-profit advocacy group, Transport Action Ontario (TAO) was interested in Greg Keenan's article in the Globe and Mail of October 8th, 2015 regarding southern Ontario airport specialisation and passenger growth predictions for the next two decades.

Our immediate issue relates to the delivery of increasing passenger numbers to airports given escalating congestion problems on approaching highways, particularly the 401, 403, 427 and QEW. This is causing many airport users to substantially extend their travel times, particularly under adverse weather conditions, and detracts from their travel experience.

We fully recognise that on-site parking and not losing passengers to ground-based travel options for short-haul flights are currently important to GTAA revenues. However, we also suggest that air passenger traffic growth and ease of mobility between airports could best be accommodated by a better balance between road and rail options. This is common practice in Europe where different modes are considered more complementary than competitive.

UPX has the capability to deliver passengers to/from Pearson within the GO Transit catchment area and to/from BBTCA and one would expect to see increasing usage as the automobile loses its competitive advantage. But there is a problem outside of GO's geographical coverage for those passengers where the automobile is neither available nor considered viable.

Although there is ongoing discussion on high-speed rail developments in southern Ontario, TAO believes that an enhancement of VIA Rail's existing intercity services, combined with transfer to UPX at Union or Weston stations, would help the GTAA achieve its longer term passenger and revenue objectives particularly over the next 10 -15 years or so. More frequent VIA services on existing routes with additional early morning and late evening arrivals could improve access to Pearson over the widest possible catchment area. Brantford, Stratford,

Kitchener/Waterloo, Woodstock, Belleville, Cobourg and surrounding communities would then have a more convenient, car-free airport access option.

TAO actively advocates for improved VIA Rail services to a standard that at least approaches that of our G7 partners. We continue to stress the importance of convenient intermodal connections in pursuit of balance. This ensures that all transportation service providers and their shared passengers reap the maximum benefits from their operations over the long term.

With the GTAA and VIA Rail seeking sustainable traffic growth opportunities the apparent synergies are hard to ignore. TAO has not approached VIA Rail on this issue as we believe that the GTAA should review the strategic opportunity first and then engage with VIA based on perceived or quantified merit.

In the meantime TAO is available for further discussions at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth Westcar  
Board Member,  
Transport Action Ontario

c.c. Hon Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport