

Open Letter to Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport Passengers Regarding 2018 Air Help Survey

Dear YTZ Passengers,

In May of this year, Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport found itself on AirHelp's list of lowest ranking airports. As a passenger-driven award-winning airport with a very high customer satisfaction rate (97% of YTZ users have a positive opinion of the airport according to a 2018 Environics poll), we were surprised to learn about this rating and so we did some digging of our own to find answers that we could share with you, our valued passengers.

What we found, for a variety of reasons, indicates that AirHelp's methodology does not quite work when applied to Billy Bishop Airport. First of all, it does not include an assessment of the contributing data or factor in circumstances related to size or climate. In AirHelp's survey, every airport is treated the same regardless of size, location or regulation. In many respects, Billy Bishop Airport is unique in the world so applying a standard methodology does not provide an accurate representation of actual performance. As you may be aware, the methodology applied by AirHelp is as follows: 40% of ranking is based on service quality, food and shops, and 60% on On-Time Performance (OTP).

Service Quality (40%)

Billy Bishop Airport is widely known to offer the best customer service in the industry, which is why we have won international passenger-driven awards such as Skytrax, Condé Nast Traveler and Airport Council International's Airport Service Quality awards consistently for the last five years. Further, the social media responses from our passengers that continue to pour with regard to the AirHelp survey are just a sample of the loyalty and love passengers have for our airport in the areas of efficiency, customer service and convenience.

With regard to food and shops, until late last year it is certainly fair to say that we did not have much in the way of retail or restaurants. However, in November 2018 that all changed when the passenger lounges were expanded to include retail and restaurants such as Balzac's and Obispo.

On-Time Performance (60%)

In relation to On-Time Performance (OTP) (i.e., delays) which accounts for 60% of the score, what is troubling about the AirHelp survey is that it does not take into consideration the specifics of an airport and therefore represents a skewed version of the story. In our case, these specifics are as follows:

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BILLY BISHOP TORONTO CITY AIRPORT | AÉROPORT BILLY BISHOP DE TORONTO | PORT OF TORONTO | PORT DE TORONTO | OUTER HARBOUR MARINA | MARINA DE L'AVANT-PORT

1. We are a slot-constrained airport with a maximum of 202 commercial flights per day. This in comparison to Pearson, for example, that has 1,685 per day (90 slots per hour for 18 hours). As such, if we experience a delay – even just a few delay of 15 minutes or more – it significantly throws our numbers off. Our base is so small that every delay has a huge impact on OTP.
2. We are a Canadian airport and therefore are impacted by weather far more than places like Spain, Brazil, Qatar or Greece. Look at the top 10 rankings and you will not find many (or any) airports that are located in a cold climate that is subject to harsh winters.
3. We fly to 22 destinations. Some of those destinations – such as Newark, Montreal and Boston – have had a few bad years due to construction and bad weather that have had an impact on our OTP. Newark, for example, had 120 days last year where they had to institute a Ground Delay Program (GDP) due to weather or capacity issues. If they downstream airports have delays, we have delays. And again, we have relatively few arrivals and departures per day so even one or two delays a week can seriously affect our On-Time Performance.
4. Billy Bishop Airport is a hub for one airline – Porter (Air Canada flies fewer than 30 flights per day and only goes to Montreal). Therefore, if Porter experiences any disruption at another airport or in any other way, the impact is significant at Billy Bishop Airport. We do not have airline diversification like many airports.
5. We operate near an urban centre and therefore have a curfew so as to not disrupt our neighbours. This means we are closed to commercial traffic from 11:00 p.m. to 6:45 a.m. When most airlines/airports have delays they will make the flights up by pushing later into the evening. We close at 11:00 p.m. so there is no ability to catch-up on the schedule by pushing later into the evening. Everything has to wait until we-reopen at 6:45 a.m.

Given the lack of contributing data and context – combined with the fact that this ranking runs counter to every other survey and ranking we know of – we don't believe this survey is a true reflection of the experience at Billy Bishop Airport.

We hope that this letter provides some helpful context. Ensuring that passengers enjoy a smooth and positive experience from curb to gate and beyond when travelling through YTZ is at the heart of everything we do and we want to thank you, our passengers for your continued support and loyalty.

Sincerely,



Gene Cabral
Executive Vice President, PortsToronto and Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport