



## HUMBER BAY

The views across Humber Bay, particularly the vista of Toronto's skyline, are among the most striking in the region. The sense of place around the bay itself depends strongly on natural and visual attributes: the river and its banks, the curve and slope of the shoreline, the lake and distant perspectives. Collectively, these convey a sense of arrival and departure, an impression of natural beauty, and a vision of human settlement at the water's edge. Since the beginning, these three forces — nature, transportation, and settlement — have determined the use, development, and physical form of historic Humber Bay.

Its future will be determined, to a substantial degree, by these same forces, as they bear on the basic issues that currently characterize the area; these include the following:

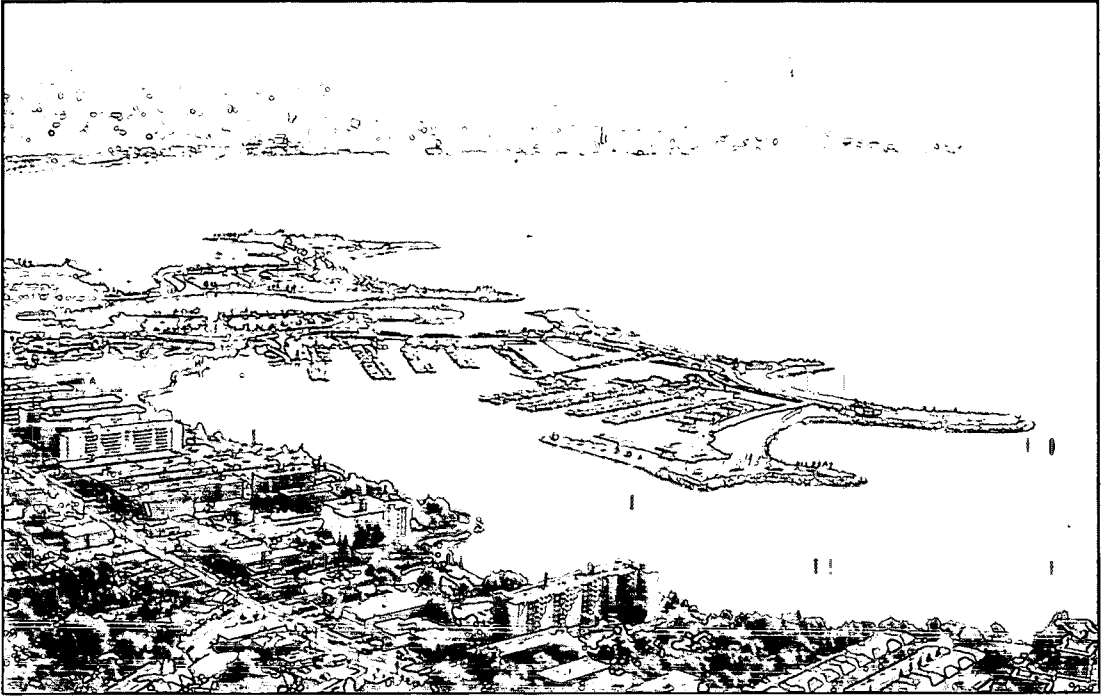
- Humber Bay has a natural heritage in urgent need of remediation. (This issue is dealt with in more detail in the Environmental Conditions section of this chapter and in chapters 3 and 9 of this report.)
- Humber Bay's historic role as a place of human settlement for industry, recreation, and pleasure has been diminished and fragmented and must be revitalized.
- Humber Bay is a significant regional transportation corridor currently in need of change.
- Humber Bay has a trademark role as gateway to the central city, with a magnificent vista of the bay that must be appreciated and protected.

The mouth of the Humber had been a gateway at the beginning or end of ancient trails for aboriginal peoples long before the first European, Étienne Brûlé, arrived there in 1615. He had travelled south from Georgian Bay via the famous "passage de Toronto", along the banks of the Humber River. He and those who followed him saw the mouth of the Humber, and its access to Lake Ontario, as a crucial element in the European quest for riches from trade, saving souls, and strengthening (French and, later, English) notions of Empire.

More than 325 years after Brûlé — and after a mind-boggling sea-change in technology, culture, and settlement — that

**The mouth of the Humber River and the shoreline to either side of it have long occupied a crucial position in the history of the development of Toronto. As a place in the wilderness, on the edge of the City or within the metropolis, the growth and physical form of the Humber Valley/High Park/Western Beaches Corridor has been predominantly influenced by the tension which has resulted from its concurrent perception as both a place to travel to — whether campground, trading station, pleasure ground or park — and a place to travel through — whether by canoe, foot, horseback, stagecoach, train, streetcar, automobile or bicycle.**

Garwood-Jones and Van Nostrand Architects Inc., Gerrard and Mackars Landscape Architects Inc., and B-A Consulting Group Ltd. 1991. *The Humber River/High Park/Western Beaches civic design study*. Toronto: Toronto (Ont.). Task Force on the Gardiner/Lake Shore Corridor.



*Humber Bay, looking east from the Etobicoke waterfront to downtown Toronto*

same sense of gateway and vista was captured by the remarkable planning and design of the Queen Elizabeth Highway.

The Queen Elizabeth Way was North America's first divided highway, begun in 1931 as a make-work project in a rapidly deepening Depression. In 1934, Tom McQuesten, the new provincial Minister of Public Works, his deputy, and the chief engineer, both named Smith, were joined in their determination to make the new road a thing of beauty, as well as an engineering masterpiece. A lawyer, McQuesten was known as the "artist-builder": he left his imprint on the Niagara Parks system, the Royal Botanical Gardens, the Peace and Rainbow bridges, and the Niagara Parkway. He and the Smiths conceived the QEW as a scenic parkway and public motorway with a wide planted median, limited access, cloverleaf interchanges, lighting, and landscaping. They hired sculptors and landscape

architects as well as engineers; bridges were embellished, views were preserved and enhanced. What it meant to the generations who used it has been eloquently recollected by Robert Stamp (1987), who was a boy at the time, in his book *The Queen Elizabeth Way: Canada's First Superhighway*.

We rolled over those magnificent bridges at Bronte Creek, Sixteen Mile Creek, and the Credit River. We passed straight through the Highway 10 intersection at Port Credit, thanks to that marvelous 1930s contribution to highway technology — the cloverleaf interchange.

Dusk might begin to fall as we neared the end of our journey. Car lights and roadside lights were turned on. The divided highway seemed every bit as safe in the dark as it did in broad daylight. Mom and Dad still referred to Highway 27 as Brown's Line. That intersection marked the beginning of



suburban Toronto with its small factories and industrial buildings hugging the sides of the road. Brightly-lit signs proclaimed Toronto's contribution to my childhood world: Lipton Tea, G. H. Wood: Sanitation for the Nation. All good things came from Toronto.

Then the Lion Monument loomed up in the median ahead of us. Hello Lucky Lion! Let the marble columns of Union Station welcome others; the QEW's stone lion was my favourite introduction to the city.

Finally, we swooped over the Humber Bridge, marked the Palace Pier on our right and caught a glimpse of our first red and yellow streetcar on the left. Ahead lay the bright lights of Sunnyside, the Exhibition, and downtown Toronto itself. It was all made possible by the Queen Elizabeth Way.

Vistas! Compared with other major city regions, Toronto has done very little to protect its vistas. Perhaps we've simply taken them for granted or, because of jurisdictional narrowness and fragmentation, perhaps their importance has not been articulated in a way that enables public discussion and opinion to inform public policy. Certainly,

as the Commission was reminded, time and time again, the importance of vistas has not been lost on people personally and emotionally as they go about their daily lives.

Humber Bay offers some of the most spectacular vistas on Toronto's waterfront — vistas that, in some cases, have been marred by thoughtless construction of infrastructure, buildings, and billboards. In other cases, as Robert Stamp says, some views have been made possible and even enhanced by road and rail travel.

Humber Bay has always been a transportation corridor. Eric Arthur (1986), in his landmark book, *Toronto, No Mean City* (as updated by Stephen Otto) reminds us that, "as we travel at speed over the Gardiner Expressway and the Don Valley, we are likely to forget that we are riding on the ancient "road system of the Indian, the *coureur de bois* and the traders."

In 1750, the first "Lakeshore Road" was cut out from the "beaten trails" to connect Fort Rouillé (near the present site of the CNE Bandshell) to Fort Toronto on the east bank at the mouth of the Humber;

between 1798 and 1804, it was improved and became a public road with a ferry across the Humber in 1802 and a bridge in 1809. A stagecoach

from York to Niagara was established in 1825.

In 1850, at the dawn of the great railway boom, Lakeshore Road, along with other regional roads in the Toronto district, was sold to private interests as a toll road. During the next 40 years, as the railroads transformed the new industrial city, roads fell into disrepair as the result of neglect, scandal, and recurring corruption. In 1890,

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Lakeshore Road was turned over to the York County Council, but remained in relative disrepair until 1914-1916 when the new, provincially established Toronto-Hamilton Highway Commission virtually rebuilt the old road and paved it as Ontario's first motor traffic highway. It was 56 kilometres (35 miles) long and 5.5 metres (18 feet) wide. The road became the basis for a new industry and new development as motels and automobile-oriented restaurants sprung up along its route (particularly in the area close to the west bank of the Humber River), and the number of cars increased from 25 to 500 per day. In 1927, the road was widened to 26 metres (86 feet).

Meanwhile, the new magical world of electricity had spawned the electric streetcar, which was previewed at the Toronto Exhibition in 1883. In November 1890, the Toronto and Mimico Electric Railway and Light Co. was formed to build and operate a street railway on Lakeshore Road and to sell electric power to people along its route. By July 1893, the Toronto Railway Company had taken over operations and extended the line from the Humber River to Mimico Creek and, the following year, as far as Long Branch and, later, Port Credit. The Long Branch service to Brown's Line continues to this day.

By 1894, the last horse-drawn streetcar had disappeared as new electric "radial" lines "radiated" out from the burgeoning City of Toronto. In 1891, the very ambitious Belt Line Railway Company line was established and opened to passenger traffic; it consisted of two loops, one for the Humber Valley and the other for the Don Valley, tied together by a line along the waterfront. In time, the company died, but parts of the Belt Line remained a part of the transportation system for more than 30 years.

In 1921, the public system was reorganized as the Toronto Transportation Commission; in 1953, with the appearance of the new Metropolitan Government, the TTC became the Toronto Transit Commission, with exclusive power to provide public passenger transportation in the metropolitan area, "other than steam railways and taxis".

Throughout the 19th century and the early part of the 20th, on both sides of the river, Humber Bay filled up with people in new settlements, villages, towns, and in special places for recreation: parks, pleasures, and public amenities.

Fort Toronto and Fort Rouillé had not survived the fall of New France in 1759. Following the Toronto Purchase of aboriginal lands in 1787, Indian communities began to shrink and withdraw in the face of British expansion of the Town of York in 1793. By 1797, the new town had already expanded west along the waterfront to Bathurst Street.

In 1787, Jean Baptiste Rousseau had established a small farm and orchard on the east side of the Humber in present-day Swansea. Colonel Samuel Bois Smith came to Etobicoke in 1795 and led the way for new immigrants from the Napoleonic Wars and for Late Loyalists, who began to clear the land, construct the mills, and establish the farms of Etobicoke. In 1837, John Gardhome and his remarkable family came to homestead. They would be farmers, livestock breeders, politicians, teachers, and public servants for more than a century: in fact, in 1953 the first employee of the newly established Metropolitan Government was its Clerk, Wilbert Gardhome.

In 1847-1848, the "birth of municipal government in Etobicoke" took place at Montgomery's Tavern on Dundas Street West. John Howard built Colborne Lodge

at High Park in 1837 and, almost 40 years later, gave his 66 hectares (165 acres) to the City as a public park. He persuaded his friend, John Ellis, to buy the adjoining land, including Grenadier Pond, and build his house overlooking both the pond and the lake. In 1858, with a population of about 3,000 people, the area was given a post office, called "Mimico", leaving the original "Mimico" settlement on Dundas to be renamed as "Islington".

By 1870, with the flow of the Etobicoke River diminishing so much that it could no longer power the mill wheels, steam had become the power source of choice. Moreover, at a time when there were few industries in Etobicoke, Humber Bay boasted three brickyards — Butwell, Price, and Maloney — which were located in a triangle south from Queen Street to Lakeshore, east of Salisbury Avenue (which later became Park Lawn).

In the 1870s, the little settlement at Humber Bay, just west of the Humber River near the lakeshore, became a "lovely resort for holiday-makers from Toronto" — and it remained that way until World War I. As Esther Hayes (1974) wrote in her book *Etobicoke from Furrow to Borough*:

They came in crowds to dine and dance, to participate in games and sports, to picnic and to swim and fish or just paddle a canoe on the river. Starting from May 24, Queen Victoria's Birthday, an excursion steamer made scheduled trips daily from Toronto to the old wharf at the mouth of the Humber.

In winter, hockey, skating, and ice-boating became popular pastimes. Three hotels — the Royal Oak; the Nurse's Hotel, run by Charles Nurse; and Wimbleton House, run by John Duck — catered to the

pleasures and needs of visitors. John Duck maintained a "menagerie", where he kept bears, deer, wildcats, mink, and other animals which, increasingly, were removed from human experience. The lower Humber River also became renowned for its market gardens; people crossed the river regularly to buy fresh produce.

In the latter part of the century, the City of Toronto expanded rapidly to the west; from about the 1850s, the area west of Dufferin and the Garrison Reserve to High Park and north of the lake, was a prestigious rural retreat. By the 1880s, Parkdale had become a "pre-eminent village of the Dominion". It became an independent municipality in 1879 and a decade-long debate began on whether it should remain separate or join the expanding City. The fight was between those who supported "home rule for Parkdale" and those who marched under the banner "Economy, Union, and Progress" and supported annexation. Major John Carlaw, a strong advocate of keeping Parkdale out of Toronto's grasp, warned that annexation would mean that "our waterfront, the glory of our town, would be polluted, the water supply made inferior, and the level of taxes would go up". He was not heeded and in 1889 the little Town of Parkdale, with its 225 hectares (557 acres) and 5,651 citizens, joined Toronto as the new St. Alban's Ward.

The Sunnyside strip was acquired in 1893 and by 1909 the City had moved its boundaries to the Humber Valley and the Village of Swansea. The Swansea Bolt Works, established in 1882 (which ultimately became the Steel Company of Canada), gave Swansea its start as a modern settlement. It built row housing for its workers, at the foot of Windermere Avenue, and

donated the site for St. Olave's Church in 1886. The name of the "Windermere" Post Office was changed to "Swansea" in 1889.

William Rennie, who built his own house on John Ellis's land, founded the Presbyterian church on Morningside Avenue and built row housing for working people in different parts of the emerging village. After the severe recession at the beginning of the century, Swansea began to grow again and, by 1907, the old golf links that had marked several earlier landscapes began to sprout new houses. Swansea remained part of York Township until 1926, when it was established as a "self-governing" village. It would not be until many years later, in 1967, that Swansea, too, became part of the City of Toronto.

In the mid-1850s, the Toronto-Humber Railway Line had been established, causing a real estate "flutter" that led to plans by the Christian Socialist Movement to build a "Model Workingmen's Village" of solid, modest homes. Because of prevailing economic conditions, the project was not completed. However, the plans were dusted off again in 1906, when the Grand Trunk Railway built a major freight yard in East Etobicoke and, thereby, changed the area forever. Developers and builders were called in to create new homes and services; streets that had "gone to pasture" were re-established and new homes built on them. In less than a decade, Mimico and New Toronto emerged from being a rural to becoming an essentially urban community.

In all of the jostle and push of expansion, particularly in the early part of the new

century, it became clear that competing demands of emerging transportation technologies and the need for new places to live, work, and play, in the face of jurisdictional confusion and inertia, made it imperative to reorder things along the waterfront.

In July 1912, the newly established Board of Toronto Harbour Commissioners was authorized to create plans for the waterfront and was given substantial powers to implement them. Much of the THC's work, of course, focused on rebuilding the central and eastern harbour area, which involved

substantial land reclamation, construction of wharves, and deepening of the harbour to accommodate vessels that would use the proposed new Welland Canal.

Home Smith, a land developer and a

member of the Commission from its inception (and its chair in the early 1920s) is generally credited with the 1912 waterfront plans. He certainly was no stranger to Humber Bay. In his time, he would develop some 1214 hectares (3,000 acres) of land along the banks of the Humber, including Riverside Drive, the Kingsway, Baby Point, and the Old Mill Tea Room. In 1928, to complement the CPR's new Royal York Hotel, he built St. George's Golf Course on the banks of the Humber. The THC began work in the Humber Bay area in 1917 and, within a decade, the whole area was transformed.

The plan was imaginative in scope, bold in design, and breathtaking in implementation. It gave coherence and balance to the claims of both corridor and place and understood the growing need for waterfront

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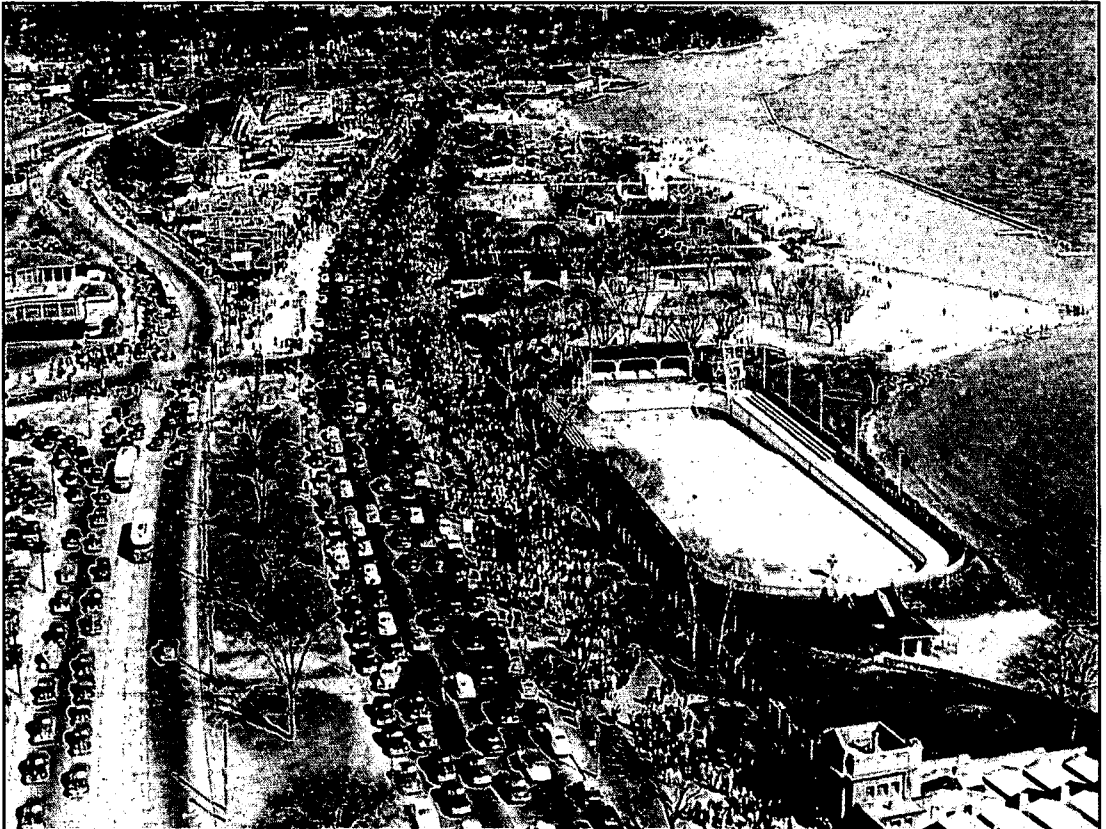
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recreation. It called for recreational facilities and parkland along the entire waterfront strip, from just west of Bathurst Street to the Humber River, with a six-kilometre (four-mile) long breakwall to control erosion and protect new uses.

As Mike Filey (1982) notes in his book, *I Remember Sunnyside*, by 1922 the Bathing Pavilion and Amusement Park had opened and almost 75 per cent of the Humber Bay section of the 1912 Waterfront Plan had been completed. Ultimately, the Harbour Commissioners developed 134 hectares (330 acres) — 46 hectares (113 acres) of protected waterways behind 5,482 metres (17,985 feet) of breakwall, 47 hectares (115 acres) of park, 35 hectares (86 acres) for sale or lease, and 6 hectares (16 acres) of dedicated streets. Two major thoroughfares,

Lake Shore Boulevard and Lakeshore Road, were laid out along the newly filled waterfront expanse that had been created by pumping 3,058,200 cubic metres (4,000,000 cubic yards) of sandy muck from the lake bottom and distributing it along a six-kilometre (four-mile) stretch of Humber Bay's waterfront shoreline. In time, the THC would build a new ballpark, Maple Leaf Stadium (1926) at the foot of Bathurst Street, and an airport on the Toronto Islands (1939).

Sailing, rowing, and canoeing facilities were developed as old clubs, displaced by the THC from Toronto Bay because of the harbour improvements, relocated west. The Argonaut Rowing Club, the longest continuously operating rowing club in Canada, established in 1872 at the foot of George Street, and later moved to the York

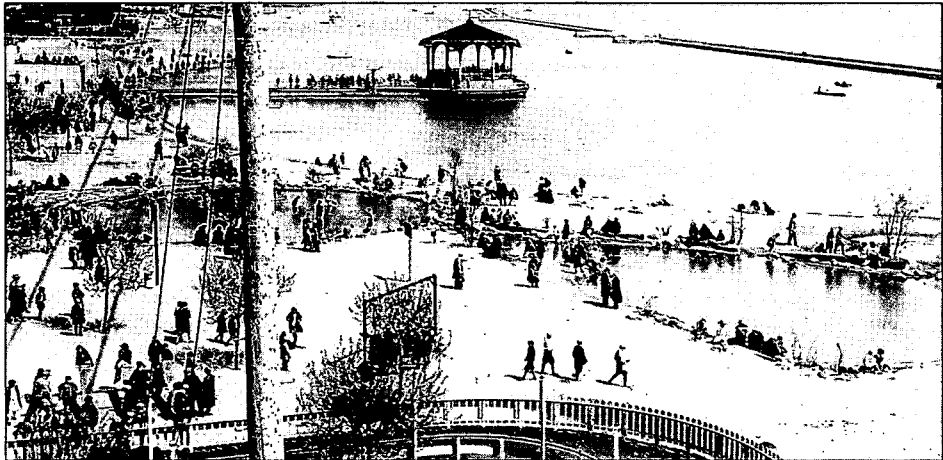


*Sunnyside, Easter Sunday, 1949*

## SUNNYSIDE: A PLAYGROUND BY THE LAKE

A thundering and thrilling roller-coaster; a luxurious merry-go-round; tantalizing Honey Dew, hot dogs, and Downyflake doughnuts; bands, dances, and boat rentals at the Palais Royale — these were just some of the attractions at Toronto's Sunnyside Bathing Pavilion and Amusement Park, situated along Lake Ontario between the Humber River and Exhibition Place.

Not long after its inception in 1922, Sunnyside became known as a “playground by the lake”. Children with bathing suits and towels in hand jumped on street cars and were transported, free of charge, to Sunnyside, where they enjoyed the 91-metre (300-foot) long swimming pool, the rides, and games of skill. Excited crowds flocked to the park grounds, participated in contests, entertained themselves and each other with concerts, strolled along the boardwalk or cheered entertainers and their outrageous acts, which included, for example, a female impersonators' competition and dancing bears.



*Enjoying the lake and sandy beach, Sunnyside, 1926*

Fond memories of the amusement park still linger in the minds of many Torontonians. Sam Sniderman (Sam the Record Man) recalls Sunnyside as “the focal point . . . for our courting and social activities . . . our only chance for a holiday resort”. Radio and television personality Elwood Glover spoke of being taken to the amusement park “. . . where the lights and crowds and noise recreated . . . all the excitement of a county fair”. He also recalled “. . . a bandshell with its back to the lake, where every Sunday night a People's Credit Jewellers broadcast would take place” (Filey 1982).

Seventy years later, it is still possible to walk through Sunnyside Park. The Palais Royale and the Bathing Pavilion are still intact and in operation. However, the glorious and exciting days that marked time spent at the park can no longer be captured. Most of historic Sunnyside was destroyed after World War II to make way for the Gardiner Expressway. A unique era, and a unique part of the City, are gone.

Source: Filey M. 1982. *I remember Sunnyside: the rise and fall of a magical era*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.



Street pier, was relocated to the foot of Jameson Avenue (which was then still connected to the waterfront). The Toronto Sail and Canoe Club, established in 1880, was relocated to the foot of Dowling Avenue, where it joined the Boulevard Club, which had been established in 1905 as the Parkdale Canoe Club. The Palais Royale was erected in 1920 and an entire generation “swung and swayed” and “jumped and jived” to Bert Niosi and Ellis McLintock and many other Big Bands. The Sunnyside Amusement Park, officially opened on 28 June 1922, was the “poor man’s Riviera” and still exerts a powerful hold on the memories of the millions who went there. Mike Filey (1982) recalls the memories of a boy growing up in Swansea:

Sunnyside was a world just outside our neighbourhood. From our house on Ellis Avenue, you walked to the bottom of the street, passing Catfish Pond and the Camels’ Hump hills on the right and Grenadier Pond and High Park on the left. Just as you came out from under the railway bridge, by the old Lake Simcoe ice-house, you could feel the charge as the village met the lake.

Across the short field and a narrow Lakeshore Road we would run to get to our first goal — the boardwalk! The boardwalk was the great pathway to imagined pleasures — a kind of yellow-brick road that stretched as far as the eye could see and where you could feel the excitement as the boards warmed your feet in the summer sun.

And there it was! The water, the breakwall, the colours, the people, the

smells, the happy noise — the sheer energy of it all. A world of rides, Honey Dew, music and chips with vinegar and salt.

By the late ’40s, it had all begun to change. In 1948, a subcommittee of City Council tabled a report calling for a 19 kilometres (12-mile) long super highway from the Humber River to Woodbine Avenue. In 1953, the newly established Council of Metropolitan Toronto approved 13 kilometres (eight miles) of it; by 1955, the Frederick G. Gardiner Expressway, Canada’s first full-scale urban freeway, was under construction and, by 1957, it was in operation.

The new expressway was a matter of great civic pride and understood to be the harbinger of economic and cultural progress. It was a part of the great program of growth of the 1950s, in which the new was clearly perceived to be of greater value than the old. Building the new transportation corridor

sealed the fate of an already-deteriorating Sunnyside and began to significantly alter the vision of Humber Bay that had informed the 1912 Waterfront

Plan. Coherence and balance began to slip away; the sense of the area as a place or series of places connected to the waterfront, to which neighbourhoods were attached and significant numbers of people would come for pleasure and recreation, gradually diminished as, more and more, Humber Bay become a corridor through which people passed on their way to somewhere else.

As a result of a central transportation corridor that comprises the Queensway, the railways, the Gardiner Expressway, and Lake

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*The Gardiner Expressway was a part of the great program of growth of the 1950s, in which the new was clearly perceived to be of greater value than the old.*

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**Today, from the regional perspective the western edge of the [Central waterfront] region is a sleeper — an area ripe for development, or possibly inappropriate development. There is an exciting opportunity and challenge for those concerned with the best use of this irreplaceable resource: the limited shoreline.**

Toronto Waterfront Charrette. [1989]. *Toronto Waterfront Charrette: blueprint for the future: a report to the agencies, property owners and residents of Metropolitan Toronto*. Toronto: Toronto Waterfront Charrette. Charrette Steering Committee.

Shore Boulevard, such historic public places as the Humber Valley and High Park, and such long-established urban Toronto neighbourhoods as Parkdale and Swansea, have been further isolated from each other and from the waterfront.

In the past few years — pushed as always by the forces of new land development, changes in transportation, and concern for environmental health — there has been considerable activity in the Humber Bay area and a number of studies that will profoundly affect its future.

In Etobicoke, the City Planning Staff's work on the official planning process has been supplemented by a *Lakeshore Overview Study* undertaken by the Butler Group (1991), and by two site-specific studies of the motel strip, one done by A. J. Diamond, Donald Schmitt and Company (1991) and the other by the Kirkland Partnership (1991). The Province of Ontario has declared the motel strip to be an area of Provincial Interest under the Planning Act.

The studies, and the negotiations and official processes involving them, were

dealt with in the previous chapter; it is their effect on Humber Bay that concerns us here. The various proposals and studies include perspectives on priorities for environmental remediation, shoreline management plans, protecting vistas and regional view corridors, waterfront protection techniques, building heights, open space opportunities, transportation facilities, urban design, and detailed built form requirements. When placed in the context of the ecosystem approach accepted by the Province of Ontario, they should give considerable momentum to the efforts to rehabilitate and regenerate Humber Bay.

Recently, the City of Toronto (1991) established *The Humber River/High Park/Western Beaches Civic Design Study* to:

examine the means of improving the western end of the Gardiner-Lakeshore Corridor extending from Roncesvalles Avenue to the Humber River . . . to see how this section of the waterfront can be improved to once again serve as a meeting place of distinction along the Greater Toronto Waterfront.

Its objectives include:

- creating a major gateway to the City at the Humber River;
- improving the open space connections between the Humber River, the Western Beaches, and High Park;
- investigating the realignment of Lake Shore Boulevard between Roncesvalles Avenue and Ellis Avenue, and of the Queensway between the South Kingsway and Ellis Avenue; and
- proposing improvements to pedestrian environments, landscapes, and street-scapes in the transportation corridor.

It recommends the following civic design strategies, which are intended to improve vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access to, and movement through, the Gardiner/Lakeshore Corridor:

- two new waterfront trails along the waterfront: a new pedestrian boardwalk and a new, separated bicycle path linking the City of Toronto with the City of Etobicoke;
- new pedestrian promenades along the north and/or south sides of both Lake Shore Boulevard and the Queensway;
- a direct new link between the Humber Valley trail and the new waterfront trails under the proposed new Humber bridges;
- the proposed extension of the Harbourfront LRT westwards to the Humber River along the Queensway;
- a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge from High Park, crossing the Queensway, the railway tracks, the Gardiner Expressway, and Lake Shore Boulevard, in order to provide direct access to the waterfront;
- improvements to the quality and amenity of at-grade vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access to the waterfront at Windermere Avenue, Ellis Avenue, Colborne Lodge Drive, and Parkside Drive; and
- a new pedestrian deck and bridge at Roncesvalles Avenue that will link it directly to the waterfront.

Civic design strategies to improve the quality and amenity of public places within the corridor include:



*Transportation corridor, 1990*

- providing new urban parks in the Swansea, High Park, and Parkdale portions of the corridor;
- providing a new urban design structure for the potential redevelopment of the Stelco site;
- improving the civic and physical design of the proposed new Humber bridges and their environs, in order to establish a new gateway to Toronto and Etobicoke; and
- providing a series of new waterside plazas, piers, and monuments that will reinforce significant visual axes within the corridor.

Transportation strategies proposed in support of the civic design strategies include:

- realigning Lake Shore Boulevard north, in order to provide unimpeded pedestrian waterfront access on an

additional 6.9 hectares (17 acres) of currently inaccessible parkland;

- providing improved at-grade parking facilities that will have direct access to and from Lake Shore Boulevard, for drivers visiting the Western Beaches in general, and Sunnyside Pavilion and the Palais Royale, in particular;
- providing improved pedestrian and vehicular access to the waterfront and/or Lake Shore Boulevard at Roncesvalles Avenue, Parkside Drive, Colborne Lodge Drive, Ellis Avenue, Windermere Avenue, and the South Kingsway; and
- providing improved public transit access to the corridor, along both Lake Shore Boulevard and the Queensway.

The cities of Toronto and Etobicoke have joint stewardship with Metropolitan Toronto and the Province of Ontario in determining the future of Humber Bay. If we are to seize the opportunities that now present themselves on this historic part of Toronto's

waterfront, these authorities must begin to work with members of the public. Humber Bay is far too important to be severed and impaired by artificial planning jurisdictions.

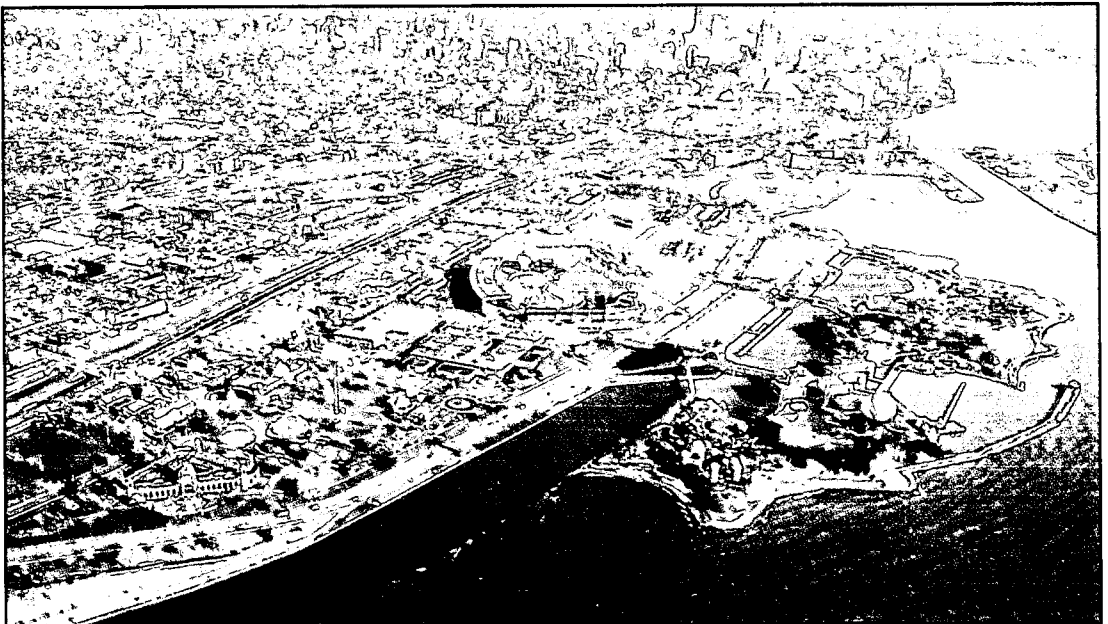
#### RECOMMENDATION

69. The Royal Commission recommends that existing and future plans and studies for Humber Bay be integrated, within the context of the program for integrating environment, land use, and transportation in the Central Waterfront described in the previous section.



#### GARRISON COMMON

The portion of Toronto's waterfront we call Garrison Common is a loose cluster of places that evoke strong collective memories. It was here that the French built Fort



*Aerial view of Garrison Common*

## Map 10.9 Historical elements



Rouillé in 1750 to support the fur trade. Forty-three years later, under the command of Governor John Graves Simcoe, the Queen's Rangers built Fort York to defend the new Town of York. At the time, the fort commanded the entrance to the harbour and was ideally situated to repel invaders. The name Garrison Common was used, at least until 1850, for the grassy area outside Fort York on which the soldiers grazed their cattle. It now refers to the area running north from the lake to Queen Street, west from Bathurst Street as far as Dufferin (and somewhat further west at its southerly end to take in all of Exhibition Place).

Other links to Canada's military history remain: the old Military Cemetery close to Fort York; the Fort York Armouries on Fleet Street, where soldiers trained in World War I, and which still houses several

famous Toronto reserve regiments. There are the active facilities of HMCS York facing onto the lake and, just west of them, lovely Coronation Park, its majestic trees planted to honour the Canadian units that served in World War I.

In many ways, the area's industrial heritage is as rich as its military heritage. Canada's most successful clothing retailers had their workrooms in the area; nearby stood the warehouses of a large grocery chain. There was a brewery, and mills and factories, as well as the vast building in which Canada's first multinational company built farm equipment to be shipped worldwide.

The western end of the Garrison Common area is dominated by Exhibition Park, home to the Canadian National Exhibition, which has played a cherished

role in Torontonians' memories since 1878. The remarkable Crystal Palace was built then as exhibition space to lure the annual Agricultural Association fair to the City. Although the building is long gone, its Victorian whimsy is echoed in the Music Building, the Bandshell, and the Horticultural Building.

The use of the area for exhibitions has continued for 113 years, luring generations of residents to its star attractions: two major annual exhibitions — one marking the end of summer, the other the beginning of winter.

South of the exhibition lands stands Ontario Place, the Province's answer to Expo '67. Built on stilts and strung out across three artificial islands, its architecture was described by William Dendy and William Kilbourn (1986), writing in *Toronto Observed*, as being "designed to amuse rather than

impress". For 21 years, Ontario Place has attracted visitors to tour its exhibits, marvel at its large-screen cinema, and enjoy music, ballet, and pop concerts in a lakeside setting.

But the glories of yesterday's Garrison Common have faded: many industries have departed, and much of the land left behind lies empty. The most-used public venues — Exhibition Place and Ontario Place — are dominated for most of the year by hectares of empty parking lots. Major traffic corridors bisect the area and cut off links to the lake. Fort York is isolated, hidden behind the concrete span of the Gardiner, and the area's park system is not a system at all, just a disconnected series of green spaces.

Despite the shabbiness of some of its parts, the area's strategic location, rich history, and the extent of public ownership in it, provide enormous opportunities for regeneration. The Garrison Common area is 308 hectares (760 acres) in size, an area perched on the water's edge, clearly in transition, and in need of renewal.

All four levels of government are involved in the Garrison Common area, as is the private sector. When the Royal Commission first began to examine Garrison Common, it soon became apparent that there was no co-ordination of activities: each major player had plans and projects that, for the most part, were being pursued in isolation from each other. Nor was this a new

problem: for decades, attempts at establishing a new plan for the area have failed, because of three factors: jurisdictional gridlock, lack of a clear economic development strategy, and

lack of a co-ordinated physical plan — in short, lack of a shared vision.

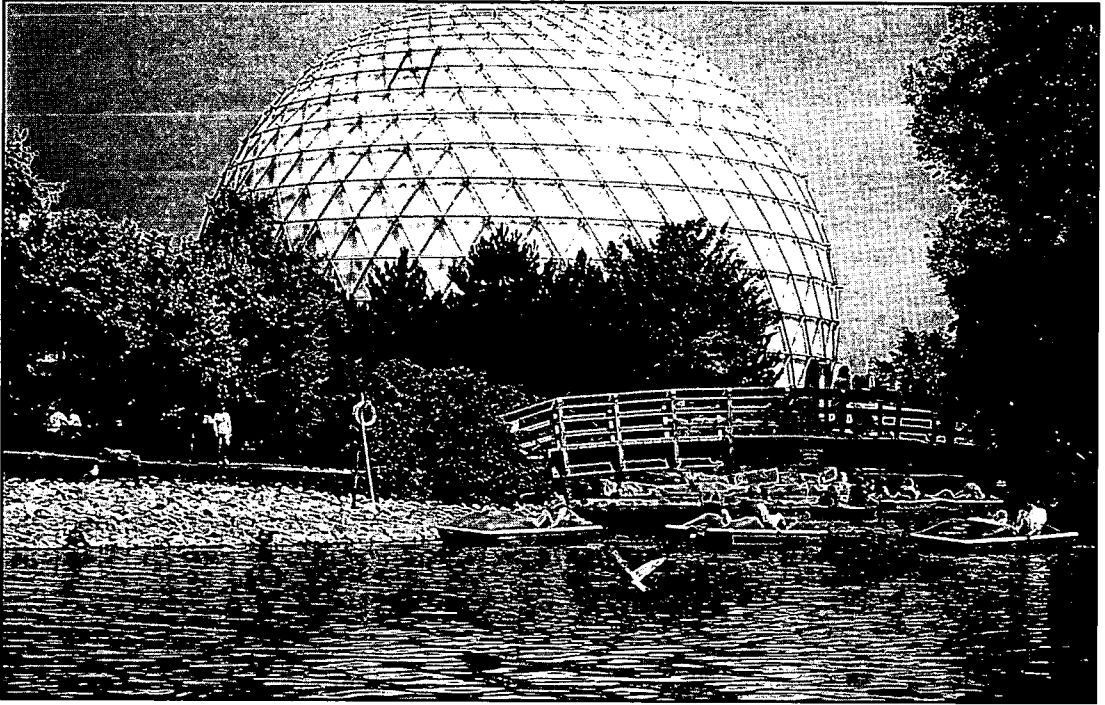
The Commission reviewed problems and opportunities in the Garrison Common area and, in its *Watershed* (1990) report, called for development of an integrated master plan. In December 1991, Ruth Grier, minister responsible for the Greater Toronto Area, formally asked the Royal Commission to do just that.

A master plan would provide co-ordinated direction for all the political, investment, and design decisions needed to regenerate Garrison Common. In the Commission's view, a co-ordinated, ecosystem-based approach was needed in order to overcome

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*Despite the shabbiness of some of its parts, the area's strategic location, rich history, and the extent of public ownership in it, provide enormous opportunities for regeneration.*

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*Ontario Place*

the fundamental challenges Garrison Common faces. There were six challenges:

**1. To create a rich natural and human environment**

Garrison Common occupies a major section of the Central Toronto Waterfront, but has a limited range of aquatic, terrestrial, and human environments. More than a third of the area's surface is covered by parking lots, roads or vacant industrial sites; 70 per cent of the land/water boundary is hard-edged. The Master Plan would ensure development and management of a complex and healthy ecosystem.

**2. To make Garrison Common a vital part of the surrounding urban area**

The publicly owned sections of the Garrison Common area — Exhibition Place, Ontario Place, and Fort York — are under-utilized and, in fact, the number

of users has declined over the last ten years.

Much of the rest of the area — industrial and railway lands — is vacant. The Niagara and Parkdale neighbourhoods, which border the area, are cut off from Garrison Common and Lake Ontario by the transportation corridor. The Master Plan would facilitate connections between Garrison Common and the urban fabric around it, and would enhance its character as a unique place.

**3. To guide major public infrastructure decisions and encourage investment in private development**

Major public investments are being considered for Garrison Common, including: extending the Harbourfront LRT from Front Street; consolidating GO corridors; and making changes to the Gardiner/Lakeshore Corridor. A major new international Trade Centre is being planned for

Exhibition Place, substantial changes to the operation of Ontario Place are under way, and improvements are proposed for Fort York. The area would be dramatically transformed by collaborative planning among agencies, and by private-sector initiatives that would result from a strong vision for the area.

#### **4. To promote the economic development of the region**

Garrison Common has traditionally played a unique role in trade and tourism in the regional, provincial, and national economy. However, if Toronto and Ontario are to remain internationally competitive in these sectors, that role must be significantly reworked and expanded: trade and tourism draws are losing ground to comparable facilities in other jurisdictions. The Master Plan would focus on establishing a program of reindustrialization and strategic development of key sectors in the regional economy.

#### **5. To enhance the attractiveness of Garrison Common**

Garrison Common is unique: beautifully situated, with marvellous views of the lake, easy access to the water, and many magnificent buildings and landscaped areas; but much of its richness is neglected and undiscovered. The Master Plan would ensure that a consistently high standard of building design, composition, and landscaping is achieved, and that environmental quality becomes a goal in itself.

#### **6. To co-ordinate long-term management of Garrison Common**

The opportunity inherent in so much publicly owned land has not been realized because of the multiplicity of governments

involved in the area. There is now a clear willingness to move towards a co-ordinated (and ultimately consolidated) management and development structure; the Master Plan would be the basis for doing so.

### **PROCESS**

The *Garrison Common: Preliminary Master Plan* (Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg et al. 1991) was developed under the direction of a Steering Committee composed of representatives from all four levels of government and their respective boards and agencies. The work was carried out by a multi-disciplinary group of consultants with expertise in urban planning, environmental design, transportation planning, and economic analysis. They met regularly with the Steering Committee, and held individual meetings with representatives of the area's landowners and residents.

An ecosystem approach was central to the development of the Garrison Common Master Plan. This meant that the consulting team had to look beyond immediate problems to broader issues affecting the area, and had to examine the interrelationship of the biophysical and human environments. Development of the Master Plan was based on the belief that incorporating natural systems into the planning process is essential to shaping a healthy human habitat.

In applying the ecosystem approach, a number of possible planning options were generated for Garrison Common. The net impact on and benefits for the whole system — natural, social, and economic — were evaluated for each one.

What the consultants have created is not "the final word" on Garrison Common, but a concept and a vision — a starting



place from which to build for the area's future. Certainly, the preliminary response to the release of the report bodes well for a co-operative and constructive process involving the four levels of government and their agencies. There is considerable support, not only for the general thrust and vision of the Preliminary Master Plan, but for developing partnerships amongst the parties that will allow the plan to be finalized and action to begin.

## **DEFINING A NEW ROLE FOR GARRISON COMMON**

One of the first tasks was to analyse the current role of Garrison Common and to develop an economic development strategy for the area. The resultant strategy is based on a recognition of the area's international, regional, and local potential; it has four major components:

### **1. Developing tourism for both domestic and international markets**

Toronto's position as one of the top 10 tourist destinations in North America should be protected by a strong tourism strategy that would include development of new attractions for the enjoyment of visitors. Other than the SkyDome, there has been no significant new facility, event or amenity developed since the early '80s. The potential exists at Garrison Common to establish new cultural, sports, and entertainment facilities and new regional attractions (such as an aquarium), and to host festivals (such as Caribana, Mariposa, and a Winter Festival).

### **2. Expanding trade, particularly at the regional and international levels**

The trade functions at Exhibition Place should be repositioned from the essentially local and regional, to become an internationally important venue. In part, this can be done by developing an internationally competitive trade and exhibition centre, which the city now lacks. The logical site is Exhibition Place.

A partnership of public- and private-sector interests are currently studying the issue intensely. The current proposal by Metropolitan Toronto involves renovating existing exhibition buildings and adding new, temporary exhibition halls for a total of approximately 139,350 square metres (1.5 million square feet) of space. Detailed planning will end in spring 1992 with the presentation of a business and design plan to Metro Toronto.

### **3. Reindustrializing old industrial areas, focusing on dynamic sectors of the new economy**

Among the enterprises in Garrison Common that are now gone are Massey-Ferguson, Inglis, and Molson's. The loss, in

just the last 10 years, of almost 2,000 jobs in the area — almost 15 per cent of total employment — leaves large and well-located tracts of land that provide a strong opportunity for Toronto's reindustrialization.

They should be used as a resource on which new and leading-edge industry can be developed, encompassing the manufacturing, design, trading, and service sectors.

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*Toronto's position as one of the top 10 tourist destinations in North America should be protected by a strong tourism strategy that would include development of new attractions for the enjoyment of visitors.*

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*Arts, Crafts and Hobbies Building, Exhibition Place*

#### **4. Developing communities by expanding existing, and creating new, residential neighbourhoods**

There are significant opportunities in Garrison Common to create new residential communities, and to preserve and expand existing residential neighbourhoods. The Bathurst-Spadina neighbourhood section of the Railway Lands will reach as far west as Bathurst Street and offers the potential of expanding them westward into the Fleet Street lands. North of the track corridor, the basic street and open space pattern of the Niagara neighbourhood can also be extended west towards Strachan Avenue, using available public or vacant industrial land.

#### **ENVIRONMENT**

The condition of the aquatic environment along the waterfront is poor, and as indicated previously, a Remedial Action Plan is being developed in order to restore water quality. In Garrison Common, as elsewhere along the Central Waterfront, water quality and aquatic habitat are degraded: the lake water and bottom sediments are contaminated with nutrients, heavy metals, and organic chemicals. The area lacks fish habitat areas for spawning and feeding, although there is the potential for improving habitat within the breakwalls and in the Ontario Place lagoons. Poor connections between terrestrial habitats and the limited diversity of plant communities have resulted in sterile

landscapes with limited ability to support wild-life and birds, and lacking in micro-climate protection and visual interest for people.

The transportation corridors, areas created by lakefill, and former industrial lands may have contaminated soils. Large areas of surface parking create problems with blowing dust, and traffic in the transportation corridor is a significant source of the area's air pollution.

Proposals for regenerating the natural environment in Garrison Common include strategies for improving water quality and open space. Reconfiguring the breakwaters and shoreline in and adjacent to the area would create a series of aquatic habitats, including wetlands and beaches. That would improve people's access and the quality of their experience along the Waterfront Trail. The wetlands would enhance fish habitat, and improve water quality by trapping sediments and excess nutrients. Building stormwater detention ponds would upgrade water quality in the nearshore areas of the lake.

There are many proposals to improve the quality and variety of open space, as well as the connections between open spaces — to create a “green network” that links the various open spaces in the area. The Waterfront Trail would provide east/west links and improve access to the shoreline of Lake Ontario. One possible route for the trail is along the perimeter of the islands at Ontario Place. A waterfront “canoe trail” would connect the Humber River to the Western Gap with potential links to the Toronto Islands and the Don River.

It is proposed that a Garrison Common trail be built, north from Coronation Park to Trinity Bellwoods Park, in order to establish a strong north-south connection with

the lake. The trail would follow a series of existing and proposed parks and open spaces: a symbolic reference to Garrison Creek would be created, in the area where the creek and ravine once existed, through a series of stormwater management ponds, regrading, and revegetating with native woodland and meadow species.

The possible relocation of the Georgetown GO line further west would provide an opportunity to establish a green connection to Black Creek on the existing right-of-way.

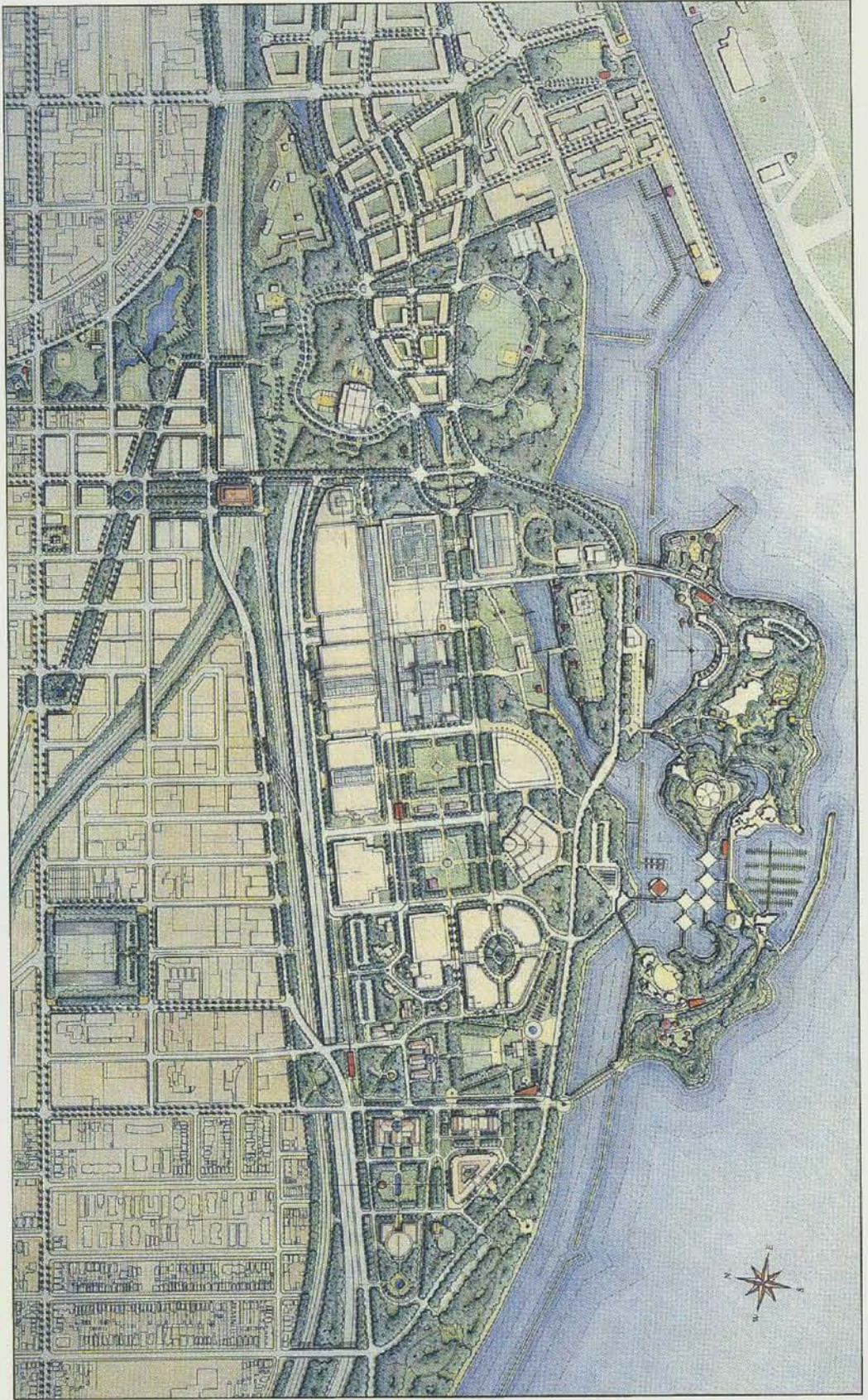
Fort York would be better connected north to Trinity Bellwoods Park, east to the SkyDome and CN Tower, west to Exhibition Place, and south to the lake. Landscaping to recreate the original shoreline of Lake Ontario would be undertaken and could include symbolic shingle beach and water elements, a boardwalk link to Little Norway Park and the Western Gap, and relocation of the original Queen's Quay lighthouse to the site from its current home in Gore Park.

The existing sea of asphalt at Exhibition Place would be reduced and landscaped. At the west end of Exhibition Place, the integrity of the beaux-arts landscape would be maintained and enhanced by creating more pavilions-in-the-park and appropriate landscaping.

## **LAND USE**

The plan proposes to continue and enhance the park and recreational character of Ontario Place, Exhibition Place, Coronation Park, and Fort York. The eastern end of Exhibition Place would be substantially redeveloped, with the creation of an upgraded Trade Centre, which would be designed to complement the surrounding

**Figure 10.1 Preliminary Master Plan**



park. Infill buildings on the other major public lands would be developed on a scale and character consistent with those already established.

With an active Trade Centre to the north, there would be major opportunities to expand the scope of activities at Ontario Place. A year-round "Waterfront Village" with restaurants, shops, hotel, and a new Maritime Museum would diversify the facilities.

The Fleet Street lands would be the site of medium-scale mixed commercial and residential development as a transition between the higher-scale development proposed for the Railway Lands and the park-like environment of Fort York, Ontario Place, and Exhibition Place.

The Northern Reindustrialization Area would be revitalized west of Strachan Avenue, mainly with trade-mart related industries such as printing, graphics, film and communications. East of Strachan, a commercial/residential mix similar to that of Fleet Street is envisaged. Heights and densities would decline north and eastward to conform to the existing Niagara and Parkdale neighbourhoods.

## TRANSPORTATION

One of the paradoxes of Garrison Common is that it has exceptional transportation facilities, but limited accessibility. Major road and rail corridors bisect the district, but it is hard to gain access on foot, by bicycle or even by car. The routes that pass through the area to serve downtown are serious barriers to movement in

Garrison Common itself, and have a negative impact on its facilities.

The preferred transportation solutions being offered for Garrison Common are based on the assumption that at least four major proposals now under active consideration would affect the area. These include: reconfiguring the Gardiner/Lakeshore; extending Front Street west; possibly realigning the two major GO lines and constructing a new combined station; and extending the Harbourfront LRT.

The preferred solution for the Gardiner is to keep it in its current alignment, but to relocate and redesign it, at least between Strachan Avenue and Bathurst. That is the area in which it constitutes a serious visual, physical, and experiential blight on Fort York. The Front

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*One of the paradoxes of Garrison Common is that it has exceptional transportation facilities, but limited accessibility. Major road and rail corridors bisect the district, but it is hard to gain access on foot, by bicycle or even by car.*

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Street extension should run west from Strachan Avenue to connect to Lake Shore Boulevard west of Exhibition Place. The Front Street extension would improve access to the northern reindustrialization area and would make it possible to downgrade Lake Shore Boulevard from six to four lanes, modified to create a scenic waterfront drive. Traffic speeds should be lowered and traffic lights should facilitate pedestrian crossings.

Proposed realignment of the Georgetown GO line to the west would greatly benefit Garrison Common. The *Garrison Common Preliminary Master Plan* proposes a single, integrated GO Transit station, servicing both the Lakeshore and Georgetown rail corridors, which would

be built just north of the eastern end of the Exhibition grounds, and would allow passengers to connect directly with the Trade Centre. Connecting the Georgetown line to Lester B. Pearson International Airport would be a powerful component of transit infrastructure for Garrison Common and for Toronto.

Extending the Harbourfront LRT along the waterfront will mean better access to the recreational opportunities in Garrison Common. Because the revitalized exhibition and trade facilities will generate the presence of large numbers of people, a "people mover" system may ultimately be needed to link Ontario Place and Exhibition Place.

To facilitate year-round use of Ontario Place, there will have to be improvements to the circulation system, to accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile traffic. The entry bridges, which are currently

pedestrian bottlenecks, will have to be redesigned to make for easier traffic flows.

Most of the large surface parking lots that are so prevalent in Garrison Common would eventually be

displaced. Instead transit would be enhanced and people would be encouraged to use it. Some surface parking lots — small, appropriately landscaped — would remain in Exhibition Place and Ontario Place and there might be opportunities to create a reservoir of off-peak parking north of the railway tracks.

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*Connecting the Georgetown line to Lester B. Pearson International Airport would be a powerful component of transit infrastructure for Garrison Common and for Toronto.*

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*Current land use, Garrison Common*

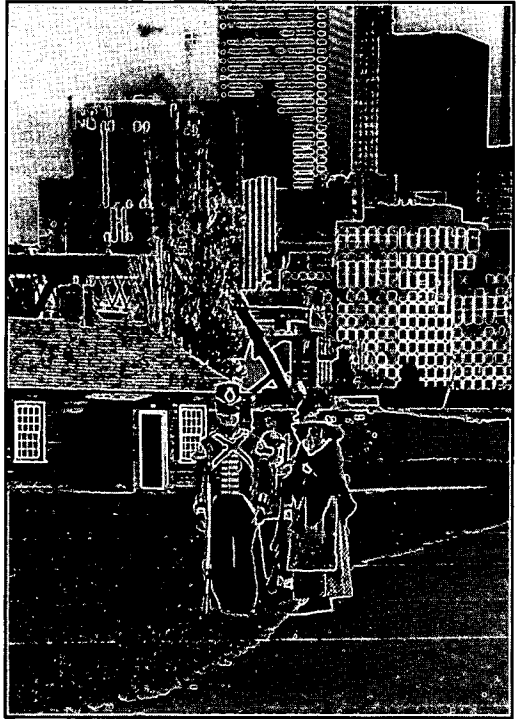
Because Garrison Common now lacks a system of local streets, it has been proposed that the city grid pattern of streets from the north and east be extended into the area. Fleet Street itself would disappear, and The Esplanade would continue to the Princes' Gates. Lake Shore Boulevard would be slightly realigned to create a Princes' Gate Square in front of the eastern entrance to the Exhibition. Inside the gates, Princes' Boulevard would continue westward, providing a strong organizing element for the structures and activities to be established there.

### **HISTORICAL ELEMENTS**

In addition to the already-described proposals for enhancing and recreating historical elements of Garrison Common, an open space connection with Trinity Bellwoods Park and northwest along the GO line would symbolically recreate Garrison Creek and link to Black Creek. The gesture of bringing water elements into Exhibition Place, Princes' Gate Square, and Fort York will recall historical connections to the original Lake Ontario shoreline.

Fort York could be given the prominence and setting it deserves by tying it into Garrison Common's green space network, relocating the Gardiner, improving access, providing symbolic links to the lake it once guarded, and creating better visual corridors. The Fort York Armoury could be used as the primary entrance to the Fort York park, and could become a more comprehensive military museum for Toronto.

There are many historical buildings in the area that should be preserved and reused. At Exhibition Place, the Horse Palace and the Coliseum could be successfully incorporated into the new Trade Centre. The fine buildings at the western end of Exhibition



*Fort York*

Place are sadly under-used and deserve permanent tenants. Potential uses include: a centre for the visual arts or educational, and environmental institutes; an aquarium; or permanent homes for major cultural institutions such as the Ontario College of Art.

The Maritime Museum needs a new location: it is too far from the waterfront and the current exhibition space is limited. This would free up Stanley Barracks for other functions, perhaps a unique meeting and reception centre, which would be enhanced by the re-creation of the original water's edge.

Other buildings that may have potential for new uses include HMCS York, as well as some of the area's remaining industrial buildings.

### **IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN**

The Royal Commission's work, in collaboration with representatives of four levels

**While urban networks exist in space and time, urban partnerships contain the potential for relationships that can animate these networks. They include the governmental and the non-governmental; professional, technical, and voluntary associations; the business, corporate and informal sectors. Partnerships can exist on a permanent or temporary basis, they can be formed through statute or through an ad-hoc desire to achieve common goals. They can exist at a local level as well as internationally.**

Jacobs, P. 1991. *Sustainable urban development*. Montreal: Third Summit of the World's Major Cities.

of government and their respective boards and agencies, has generated a Preliminary Master Plan to guide decision-making and planning in Garrison Common. However, the greatest challenges still lie ahead. Implementing an integrated Master Plan for Garrison Common will require a process that resolves current jurisdictional fragmentation, and that avoids the uncertainties, slowness, and lack of co-ordination characteristic of conventional approval processes.

The first step is to subject the plan to full public and governmental review.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**70.** The Royal Commission recommends that integrated public hearings be held to review the *Garrison Common Preliminary Master Plan*. The hearings should be jointly sponsored by the participating governments and agencies.

During the course of the Garrison Common study, the Province and Metropolitan Toronto considered submitting a bid for Expo '98, a Class B World Fair. More recently, the possibility has arisen of hosting a 1996 exposition; the prospect of presenting Garrison Common to an international audience reinforces the need for the highest standard of environmental planning, building, and landscaping design. It also emphasizes the need to move beyond the complex approval processes under which the site is now regulated, to rethink the independent and often contradictory responsibilities of government agencies, and to move towards comprehensive planning and implementation.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**71.** The Royal Commission recommends that the results of the hearings be referred to the federal and provincial governments, Metropolitan Toronto, the City of Toronto, and interested private-sector parties, for their consideration with respect to the five-year capital construction program for regenerating Garrison Common. Such a program should include:

- projects designed to improve water quality and the diversity of open space in the area;
- improvements to the existing waterfront trail system, and connections north to Trinity Bellwoods Park (the Garrison Trail);
- a new GO station to service both the Lakeshore and new



Georgetown lines, link with Lester B. Pearson International Airport, and provide a connection to the Trade Centre at Exhibition Place;

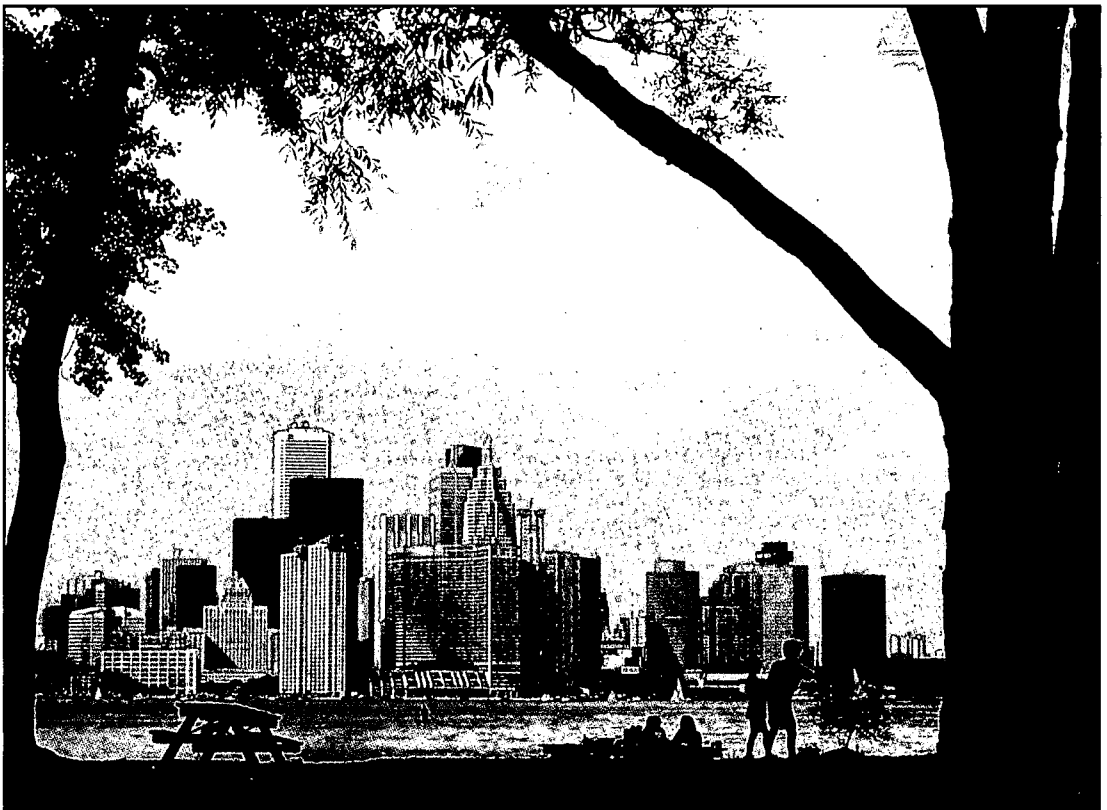
- a Trade Centre at the eastern end of Exhibition Place, and an emphasis on diverse, permanent uses for currently under-used buildings;
- improved connections at Ontario Place for pedestrians and bicyclists, development of a Waterfront Village and Maritime Museum, and a large-screen cinema complex; and
- programs designed to increase year-round accessibility and use of all amenities in Garrison Common.



## TORONTO BAY

Toronto Bay has an extraordinary setting: its 400-hectare (1,000-acre) inner harbour is framed by a 250-hectare (625-acre) island park, a picturesque regional airport, a working port and the historic entrance to the City's downtown, extending up to the old shoreline at Front Street.

The Bay has been called Toronto's "waterfront piazza". This appellation reminds us again of the importance of vistas in the art of place-making. Around and across Toronto Bay are some of the most magnificent vistas that this region has to offer; looking outwards from the City to the Lake, as well as looking at the



Toronto's "waterfront piazza"

City from the Islands, the Spit or the Lake itself.

Toronto Bay's individual places — diverse in character and function — have been changing fundamentally during the past 25 years and the area is being transformed. Their history, current forces of transition, and possible future roles are discussed in the following order:

- Railway Lands, which are now beginning to evolve into distinct neighbourhoods: City Place; Southtown; the Union Station/ Central Bayfront area; and emerging Central Park;
- Harbourfront lands, no longer an isolated enclave, but beginning to be integrated with surrounding areas;
- Toronto Island Airport; and
- Toronto Islands park and community.

## RAILWAY LANDS

In its *Watershed* (1990) report, the Royal Commission examined the troubled 30-year history of the proposed Railway Lands redevelopment, discussed the basic features of the 1985 Part II Railway Lands Plan, adopted by City Council and the railways, and concluded that — in light of changes in the area, in the Financial District, and in surrounding areas — the plan should be reviewed.

In May 1990 Toronto City Council asked its Commissioner of Planning and Development to conduct such a review, in keeping with Planning Act requirements, and consistent with a provision in the Part II Plan itself.

## A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Discussion on the future of the Railway Lands is hardly a recent phenomenon: the idea of removing 80 hectares (200 acres) of tracks separating City and lake has challenged planners, architects, developers, citizens, and politicians almost continuously for the past 30 years, and is hardly unique to Toronto. But a knowledge of the history of these lands is crucial to understanding the current situation and future opportunities.

The first major report on the lands in recent times was *The Core of the Central Waterfront*, prepared in 1962 for the City of Toronto Planning Board; it suggested decking the rail corridor and creating an expanded terminal. This idea was embodied in the

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*The idea of removing 80 hectares (200 acres) of tracks separating City and lake has challenged planners, architects, developers, citizens, and politicians almost continuously for the past 30 years.*

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1963 Plan for Downtown Toronto, ultimately adopted by City Council in 1965. At the time, both CN and CP railways were building major new freight yards in the suburbs and, in 1968, they jointly produced a study, *Metro Centre*, for the redevelopment lands. It recommended relocating the rail corridor, demolishing Union Station, and building a new intermodal transportation terminal with considerable commercial and residential development. Thus began the three-decade debate that persists to this day.

Current arguments, however energetic, are only the most recent manifestations of a much older controversy: Toronto began on the lake and waterfront development has always been an important and controversial factor in the City's evolution.

Virtually all the Central Waterfront, starting at Front Street, was created by extensive lakefilling that began in the City's early days; in the 1830s, public concern about the use of, and access to, the waterfront made the city council of the day apply for the patent of the waterlots, south of the former shoreline, to create a public, 30-metre (100-foot) wide, tree-lined promenade. Construction of this road, The Esplanade, did not begin for another 20 years, after wrangles between the municipality and various private interests. However, less than two years after The Esplanade opened in 1854, the City granted its southern 12 metres (40 feet) to the Grand Trunk Railway (now CN).

In 1855, a new railway station was built at Front and Bay streets. Lakefilling for the railways, shipping, and industry continued sporadically for the next half century. The many east-west railway tracks crossing the bottom of the busy city created dangerous and inconvenient level crossings at York,

Bay, and Yonge streets. In 1892, a bridge was built over the tracks at York Street, to permit pedestrian and vehicular access to the waterfront and minimize the effect of the rail barrier.

In 1904, the train station burned down in the Great Toronto Fire. Between 1905 and 1924, arguments continued among the CP and Grand Trunk railways, the City, the Toronto Harbour Commissioners, and the federal government on the design and location of a new station and whether there should be a raised or lowered rail corridor.

The Grand Trunk Railway supported the concept of raising the tracks on a viaduct allowing York, Bay, and Yonge streets to run under the tracks, a plan CP opposed. Its response was to build (and later vacate) its own station at Summerhill and Yonge.

In 1924, an independent commission recommended that the viaduct plan be implemented and the railway corridor was



*Summer crowds crossing tracks at Bay Street, 1912*

raised approximately six metres (20 feet). In 1927, Union Station as we know it today was opened, and more than 40 hectares (100 acres) of new land south of the station were created for rail yards. The freight line by-pass along the southern boundary, also on a raised viaduct, was constructed and then filled in to create a berm six metres (20 feet) high.

In the 1930s, and for the next 30 years, the THC continued its massive program of lakefilling south of the Railway Lands, for port and industrial uses. (It is ironic that, just as the railways were making plans to relocate their yards to the suburbs, Metropolitan Toronto, assuming the status quo, was building another waterfront barrier, the Gardiner Expressway.) Lake Shore Boulevard was constructed and, in 1963, the Gardiner Expressway opened. All the barriers to the waterfront we know so well today were firmly in place: the railway corridor and rail yards were functioning on lakefill six metres (20 feet) above the water, and the Gardiner/ Lakeshore Corridor was operational.

### **THE 1970s**

Beginning in the late sixties, CN and CP railways jointly created Metro Centre, a development company which presented a plan to the City for land owned by CN, CP, THC, the City, Metro, and the federal government. Not surprisingly, the issue of land ownership and control continually plagued plans.

The Metro Centre proposal was negotiated with the City, Metro, and the provincial government for four years and, by 1972, the Ontario Municipal Board had approved the plan for these lands. That year, construction started on the CN Tower.

In November 1974, CN shelved the development company's project, CP having left the partnership earlier.

In January 1976, the City adopted a new Central Area Plan, which called for special studies of the Railway Lands. At the Ontario Municipal Board, the railways argued that the City's plan was unacceptable and, by January 1978, Toronto City Council had proposed amendments to deal with the railways' objections. It submitted two new studies, *The Railway Lands: Basis for Planning* and *The Railway Lands: Proposed Goals and Objectives*, which were adopted by City Council after four months of public discussion.

### **THE 1980s AND 1990s**

With the Central Area Plan approved by the OMB in June 1978, a Railway Lands Steering Group was created, chaired by the Honourable John Clement, then a member of the provincial Cabinet, and comprising representatives of all governments, as well as of the railways, to conduct detailed studies and co-ordinate the efforts of the many interested parties. By May 1982, the City's Department of Planning and Development had submitted a progress report, which effectively launched the formal preparation of the new Railway Lands Part II Plan.

The final report for the Railway Lands Official Plan and Zoning By-law was submitted to City Council in July 1985, followed in August by a report on the Memorandum of Conditions, which dealt with implementation aspects of the plan (land exchanges, infrastructure, cost-sharing, etc.).

The plan set out Council's policy for the Railway Lands:

They are to be developed as an integral part of the Central Area, in order to minimize the barrier effects of

the road and rail corridor and the central city reunited with the waterfront.

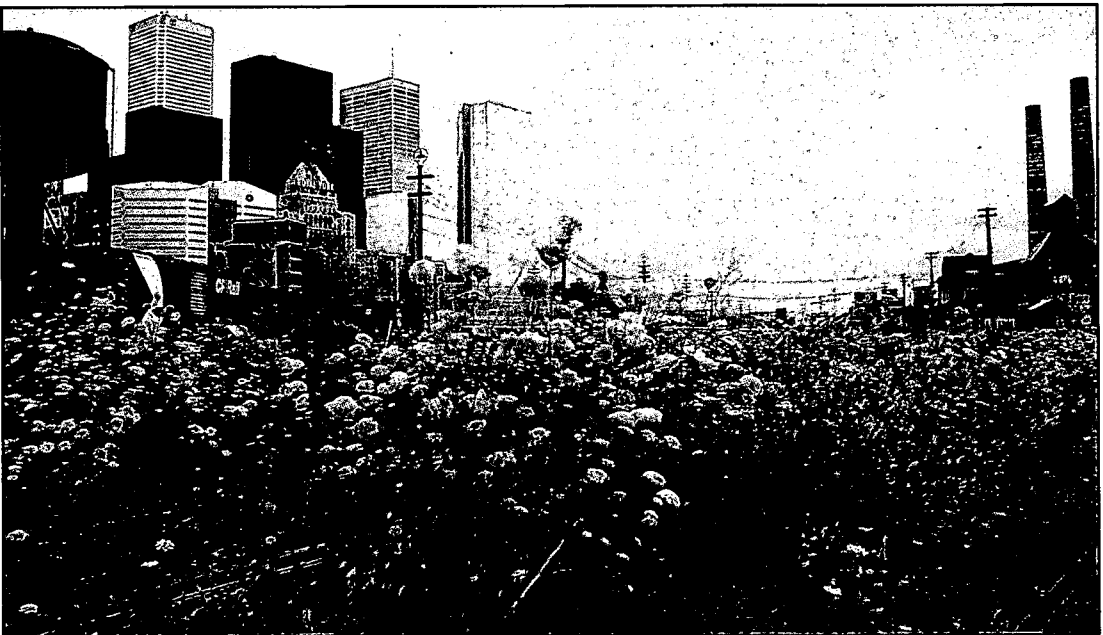
They should satisfy a broad range of commercial, residential, institutional, cultural, recreational, and open space needs, while ensuring effective and efficient transportation services, including those by inter-city rail and commuter rail.

The plan divided up the 81 hectares (200 acres) of Railway Lands into 14 precincts, and allowed for high densities, particularly at the eastern end, where it envisaged the financial district would extend into the area, with buildings as high as those in the financial district.

One crucial aspect of the planning approval process was that Council created holding by-laws ("H" designations), under which environment and transportation issues would have to be studied before the subject lands were developed. Council viewed this as "fundamental to the proper planning and incremental development of the Railway Lands".

In January 1985, Premier Davis announced that a new covered baseball stadium would be located on the Railway Lands. Council had already adopted the Part II Plan, Zoning By-laws, and Memorandum of Conditions, and in March 1986, it approved the by-laws and agreements for the stadium. All these by-laws were debated at the Ontario Municipal Board in the summer of 1986 and were approved in December of that year.

In 1988, CN and Marathon Realty, the real estate subsidiary of CP, submitted separate applications to develop certain portions of the land and requested that the H designation be removed entirely from the Railway Lands. Early the next year, unable to get the City to respond, the applicants appealed to the OMB for a hearing, which the Board set for September 1990. But in April, City Council asked its Commissioner of Planning and Development for a report on processing applications for the Railway Lands. On 25 May 1990, he submitted a



*Vacant lands offer new development possibilities*

report recommending that the Official Plan Part II for the Railway Lands be reviewed, in order to consider the implications of many changes that had occurred since it was adopted.

The City's review did not intend to deal with the Railway Lands from scratch, but to assess the possibilities for improving the 1985 plan in the context of five major objectives:

- to improve the quality of the physical environment;
- to convert commercial uses to residential where appropriate;
- to identify locations for community services (schools and a community centre);
- to reflect advances made since 1985 in knowledge and understanding of environmental needs and processes; and
- to determine the development potential and feasible location for building over the rail corridor, as well as to take advantage of the opportunity of giving the south face of Union Station a civic portal, thereby making it a gateway to and from the Central Waterfront.

Modifications to the plan adopted by City Council include:

- measures to enhance the public domain, such as increased emphasis on north-south streets, greater setbacks, and more tree planting, to create pedestrian-friendly infrastructure and capture better sunlight conditions;
- reductions in the density and height of permitted development, as a consequence of the measures described above;

- conversion of commercial to residential use where appropriate, in order to support a better balance between place of residence and place of work in the City and the region;
- an enlarged Central Park adjacent to the SkyDome and including the Roundhouse;
- improved siting for the community park at the western end of the lands and designation of school sites alongside it;
- improved urban design around Union Station; and
- improved strategies for water conservation, energy efficiency, stormwater and groundwater management, waste management, and district heating and cooling.

Overall, the revisions have reduced the amount of development space by about 30 per cent, 371,600 square metres commercial and 278,700 square metres residential (four million square feet commercial and three million square feet residential). They also offer a better relationship between the Railway Lands and the waterfront, with improved pedestrian access, and better green and open space connections to and through the Harbourfront lands to the water's edge. As a statement of policy, the changes also accommodate the possible relocation and/or redesign of the elevated section of the Gardiner Expressway.

One of the owners, Marathon Realty, has also made provision for such a change, by proposing to begin development north of Bremner Boulevard. This phasing, together with setback provisions that Marathon is also willing to make, will allow both time and space to resolve the Gardiner issue in that area.

As the plans mature, it is evident that the Railway Lands can be subdivided almost naturally into three, possibly four, distinct neighbourhoods or areas. These are:

- **CityPlace**, CN Real Estate's lands west of John Street to Bathurst Street, an area that may become more residential and less commercial in character if the City's revisions are accepted by the Ontario Municipal Board;
- **Central Park**, an area of public amenities and attractions stretching from John to Simcoe streets, and including the CN Tower, SkyDome, the Metro Toronto Convention Centre (MTCC), the planned park, and Roundhouse Museum;
- **Southtown**, Marathon Realty's lands, running from Simcoe to Bay streets, which will function principally as a southerly extension of the Financial District; and
- **The Union Station Precinct**, the central intermodal terminus and interchange for the region, as well as a primary pedestrian and transit connection between the downtown and the waterfront.

The public interests and values inherent in two of these places, Central Park and the Union Station Precinct, are worth comment.

### **CENTRAL PARK**

As a consequence of all the plans, modifications, and negotiations, the City of Toronto, as well as the other levels of government and the public agencies involved, now has a magnificent opportunity to create a Central Park worthy of the name, which could stretch from Front Street to the lake.

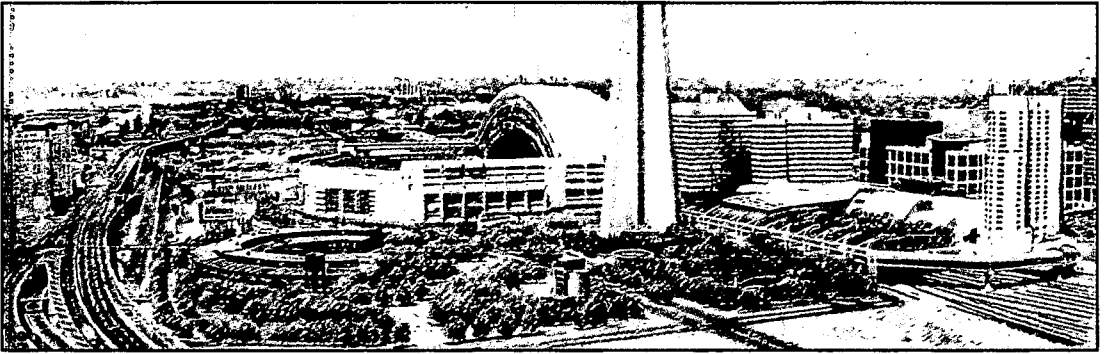
It would lie athwart the Railway Lands, as described earlier, and cross Bremner Boulevard, the Gardiner/Lakeshore Corridor, Queen's Quay West, and Harbourfront to the water's edge.

The northern 1.05 hectares (2.6 acres) of the park would consist of a landscaped deck over the rail corridor. The park would provide an attractive setting for the CN Tower, SkyDome, the renovated Roundhouse and the Convention Centre, an additional 7.3 hectares (18 acres); in the Harbourfront area, a further 2 hectares (5 acres) would be a green link to the water, either in the vicinity of York Quay Centre and Queen's Quay Terminal, or near Maple Leaf Quay.

An expansion of the Metro Toronto Convention Centre (MTCC), proposed by the provincial Crown corporation that runs the amenity, could be part of the park. Originally built with funds provided by the federal, provincial, and metropolitan governments during the 1980s, the convention centre has produced an operational profit every year since it was opened in 1985. The centre's board claims that the initial investment was recouped in two and-a-half years.

There is a wide array of conventions and meetings at the centre, which is an important source of business for Toronto's hospitality industry, attracting some two million visitors a year. But the MTCC has found that even with its 100,000 square metres (1.1 million square feet) of space, it cannot accommodate conventions, which keep growing in size, and loses business, including repeat business, that has outgrown MTCC's existing capacity.

The centre has therefore proposed to double in size by extending existing facilities southwards, under the Central Park. Planning feasibility studies have already shown



*Proposed Convention Centre expansion*

that this can be done attractively and both support and complement the City's objectives for the Central Park.

Furthermore, MTCC has indicated that, on the strength of its business record, it should be able to raise the bulk of the capital financing required for the project on its own account. It estimates that it would require less than one-third its construction costs in capital support from governments.

### **UNION STATION PRECINCT**

In *Watershed*, the Commission expressed support for the Province's ongoing negotiations with Toronto Terminal Railways (TTR) to purchase Union Station and the adjacent rail corridor, and convert them for use as the central intermodal transportation facility for the Greater Toronto region, recognizing their strategic function and location. Although the negotiations have made progress, they were not complete as this was being written in December 1991. The Commission believes that it is critically important for the Province to own these assets.

### **HARBOURFRONT CORPORATION**

The east-west railway tracks crossing the bottom of the busy City were only one of

the barriers to public access and enjoyment of the waterfront. The realities of industrial, commercial, and port use of much of the land along the water's edge had brought gritty industries, wharves, and warehouses as well as the sprawling railway yards. More recently, the Gardiner Expressway and the imposing new structures of the Central Bayfront area threatened to form a concrete curtain along the waterfront, effectively blocking off the water even as they made access to the waterfront more difficult.

At a time when the federal government was concerned about the health of cities, and particularly about getting directly involved in maintaining and restoring their well-being, it decided during the election campaign of 1972 to acquire 40 hectares (100 acres) of land in the Toronto West Bayfront area as an urban park for the people of Toronto. The announcement drew comparisons between the potential of the site and the attractiveness of Vancouver's Stanley Park, Québec's Plains of Abraham, and London's Hyde Park — all parks in the traditional sense.

The lands acquired, subsequently known as the Harbourfront lands, were bounded by Lake Shore Boulevard to the north, York Street to the east, the



harbour to the south, and Stadium Road to the west.

The federal action, taken without consultation, was adversely viewed by the Province and by local governments, thus setting the stage for conflict and requiring public consultations that delayed creation of a mutually agreed-on plan for several years. However, the importance of the site eventually brought the interested parties to the table and, in 1978, the federal government created Harbourfront Corporation to manage the task of developing the urban park.

It was clear that, if public access was to be restored, physical revitalization of the area would be necessary and that people would be drawn to the site only if activities attracted them. Harbourfront faced a two-fold challenge: to redevelop the lands and to create programs and activities that would draw people to them. The dual mandates of real estate development and programming were initially viewed as complementary and even mutually dependent: development would pay for programming; programming would justify development.

In its early years, Harbourfront was a great success: increasing numbers of people were pulled to the site by imaginative and creative programs aimed at all age groups. Art shows, dance groups, craft demonstrations, poetry readings, and theatrical presentations vied for public attention. Costs were subsidized by the federal government, by real estate development, corporate sponsorships, and ticket sales. Harbourfront Corporation and its staff were justifiably

proud of being able to offer quality programming at affordable prices.

Moreover, the early real estate developments were seen as being of high quality and very much in line with people's expectations. Renovations to the Queen's Quay Terminal and construction of the Admiral Hotel, Metro's marine police facility, and the King's Landing condominiums were perceived as good examples of urban design and renewal.

The need to satisfy increasing financial requirements for programming, as well as Harbourfront's wish to continue pursuing its goal of financial self-sufficiency, led it to a growing interest in the land development side of the business, ultimately manifested in high-rise buildings on the site.

But, as more buildings were developed, public concern grew, which, in 1987, led the City to impose a freeze on develop-

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*Opposition to the high-rises at Harbourfront was exacerbated by high-rise developments on neighbouring waterfront sites. Whether or not on Harbourfront lands, high-rises added to the growing sense that the public was being cut off from the lake.*

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ments. Soon thereafter the federal government began a policy review of Harbourfront's role and mandate. Opposition to the high-rises at Harbourfront was exacerbated by high-rise developments on

neighbouring waterfront sites between York and Yonge streets. Whether or not they were actually on Harbourfront lands, high-rises added to the growing sense that the public was being cut off from the lake and that the shoreline, rather than being used as a park for people, was becoming a housing tract.

A public review showed that people thought it was no longer appropriate for funding for Harbourfront's programming

to come from the proceeds of real estate development. A number of deputants spoke to the issue at the public hearings in early 1989. In journalist June Callwood's words, making "programming. . . dependent upon putting up more ugly buildings seems to me to be a reprehensible way for it to have been planned".

With the Central Bayfront area east of Harbourfront becoming rapidly built up and major projects being planned for the Railway Lands, Harbourfront was no longer considered an isolated urban island. In its first interim report, the Commission concluded that the Government of Canada, having essentially accomplished what it set out to do in 1972, should implement the following three recommendations:

1. Harbourfront Corporation should be converted immediately to a new entity, Harbourfront Foundation, whose mandate will be to continue the provision of Harbourfront's wide variety of outstanding cultural, recreational, and educational programs, generally by:
  - (a) programming its own activities;
  - (b) providing facilities and support to other organizations who wish to use its amenities and expertise;
  - (c) funding other organizations' programs which, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, are in the public interest and are compatible with a waterfront environment;
  - (d) placing a stronger emphasis on marine and water-related programs and activities;
  - (e) reflecting, maintaining, and preserving Toronto's waterfront and marine heritage; and
- (f) endowing the Foundation sufficiently to sustain the continuation of Harbourfront's programming activities.
2. The Harbourfront lands and properties should be planned with the City in accordance with the following principles:
  - (a) A minimum of 16 hectares (40 acres) of land be made available immediately for parkland and be conveyed to the City, including a continuous waterfront promenade along the water's edge.
  - (b) Provision of a community school site (acceptable to the appropriate school board) to serve the Harbourfront community and the surrounding area, for conveyance to the school board.
  - (c) Provision of community facilities, including, but not necessarily limited to a community centre, medical clinic, library facilities, day-care and play space for children, and a place to worship.
  - (d) The completion of Harbourfront Corporation's commitments with respect to assisted housing.
  - (e) The allocation of sufficient lands and properties to support the Harbourfront Foundation's programming mandate, as defined in recommendation 1 above, and including additional program facilities, such as:
    - (i) a nautical centre, with sufficient space to provide permanent accommodation for the sailing clubs and



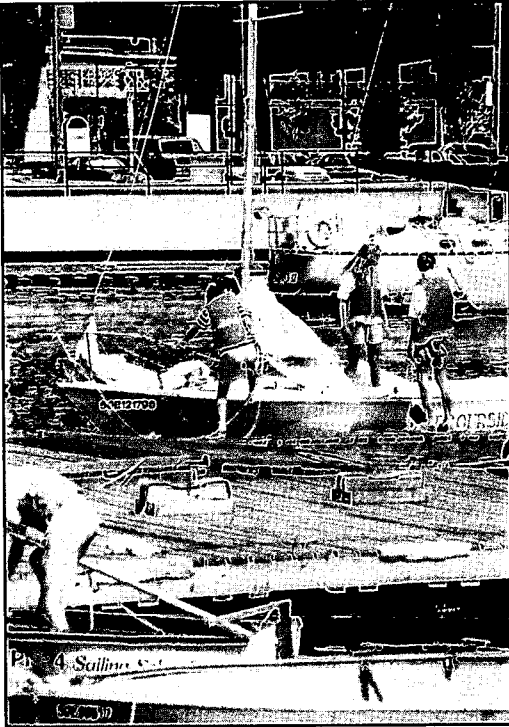
*Central Bayfront*

- schools currently operating out of makeshift facilities at Harbourfront; and
- (ii) preservation of the Canada Malting silos, and consideration of their conversion to a civic museum.
- (f) The further planning and development of the Harbourfront lands including links to adjacent areas such as Coronation Park, Molson's, Dylex, Loblaws, SkyDome, the Railway Lands, the financial district, and the Central and East Bayfront be included in the City's review of the Central Area Plan.
- (g) No further building south of Queen's Quay West with the exception of low-rise buildings considered by the City to be in the public interest.

- (h) An urban design plan be established as an integral part of Harbourfront's Official Plan amendments.

3. The federal government should work with the City, the Harbourfront Foundation, and other appropriate bodies to give effect to the changes arising from these recommendations. The lands, properties, and residual interests now managed by Harbourfront Corporation, and those still in the inventory of Public Works Canada should be held and administered by PWC on a temporary basis until appropriate agreements with the City are implemented.

The federal, provincial, and city governments moved quickly to respond to the recommendations. In November 1989 the Province declared a Provincial Interest



*Learning to sail, Maple Leaf Quay*

in the Toronto waterfront, citing excessive development and the need to preserve parkland for the public. In December 1989 the provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs advised Toronto's mayor not to implement an agreement the City and Harbourfront Corporation had made earlier that year to transfer parklands and buildings to the City. The minister then imposed a ministerial zoning order, prohibiting new construction on the Harbourfront site and asked the Premier's Special Advisor on the Waterfront, Duncan Allan, to review the agreement and bring forward a plan for Harbourfront that would serve the public interest, as recommended by the Royal Commission.

The report submitted by Mr. Allan in March 1990 to the Minister of Municipal Affairs recommended: creation of more parkland; unconditional funding of \$28 million to the City for parkland improvements;

dissolution of Harbourfront Corporation, which would be replaced by the federal government with a new entity that had the sole task of providing public programs to be funded by an endowment; disposal of all federal assets in Harbourfront; and maintenance of the provincial zoning order until the public benefits were realized.

The City of Toronto signalled its broad support for the overall direction being taken and Harbourfront's board of directors voted unanimously to concentrate solely on programming. The federal government appointed Mr. W. Darcy McKeough to make recommendations on how the federal government should respond to the Province's views.

In November 1990 Mr. McKeough proposed a reorganization of Harbourfront that would split the Corporation's functions amongst three new entities: Harbourfront '90, a not-for-profit charitable company, which would carry on Harbourfront's cultural, recreational, and educational programs; a foundation that would manage the funds generated by disposing of Harbourfront Corporation or Crown non-program real estate assets still remaining and make annual payments of income to support the programming activities of Harbourfront '90; and the Harbourfront Disposition Company, which would dispose of Harbourfront Corporation or the Crown non-program real estate assets still remaining and turn the proceeds over to the foundation.

Mr. McKeough also recommended that parkland and funds for parkland improvements be given to the City of Toronto in the amounts and locations recommended by Mr. Allan's provincial review.

The McKeough recommendations were accepted by the federal government

## SCHOOL BY THE WATER

Imagine yourself in grade four: you are on a boat, surrounded by your classmates, pulling up a vial of water from the bottom of Toronto Harbour so that you can assess the quality of its water. That type of learning experience is offered by School by the Water, a Harbourfront non-profit learning centre in York Quay Centre.

School by the Water has classes in urban studies and visual arts for students from kindergarten to college level. The urban studies program offers a hands-on opportunity to learn about the waterfront and the city's impact on it; through field trips and presentations, students are introduced to the history of the waterfront area and to its environmental, planning, and development issues. The material covered in a half- or full-day class at the school can form the basis for further regular classroom learning.

School by the Water has been active on the waterfront for 16 years and during that time, has offered many children a chance to explore Harbourfront, a vibrant part of Toronto where the city meets the lake. A small park area with trees and grass at the edge of York Quay has always been a favourite place to learn and play. Recently, however, the school was dismayed to discover that the trees were cut down for the expansion of the adjacent Molson stage. Fortunately, new trees will be planted and with time, will again provide a shady spot to relax and watch the lake.

In recent years, School by the Water has incorporated environmental issues into its curriculum. The visual arts program includes a sculpture-making workshop that utilizes "discarded" materials such as foam, plastics, and cardboard to help children in grades one to four absorb the value of recycling.

Lakewise, a program at School by the Water, was developed last year with the Harbourfront Marine Department; it focuses on Toronto's relationship with and dependence on Lake Ontario. Students visit the Toronto Islands and the Toronto Harbour, spending a day on the water where they can sample and observe the aquatic ecology of both. Aboard the passenger ship *Rosemary*, students investigate water quality, erosion, lakefilling, bird populations, and the effect of humans on them. The program was designed to foster appreciation of the natural environment and to help young people develop positive attitudes towards conserving natural resources.

School by the Water offers many city children a rare opportunity to experience the outdoors and learn about nature. By having contact with nature, and learning about the impact of the city on water quality, children learn about their role in maintaining a healthy environment. Moreover, children today may influence their parents, and later, when they are society's decision-makers, will perhaps bring with them a clearer understanding of how much is at stake.

and were being implemented by early 1991. Mr. McKeough agreed to manage disposition activities on behalf of the federal

government, including negotiating with the City on lands that were no longer required by Harbourfront Corporation



*Skating at Harbourfront*

and were to be turned over to it; negotiating with developers on shifting proposed developments from the south side of Queen's Quay West to other locations; and disposing of remaining Harbourfront or Crown non-program real estate assets to raise funds for Harbourfront '90's endowment.

The Royal Commission's recommendation on planning and design issues was intended to reflect the fact that, no longer isolated, the Harbourfront lands should also be planned on an integrated basis with adjoining lands. Excellent design on the waterfront was also important. There was a need to deal with social issues in the area; and support for the City's parkland goals was worthwhile.

In 1991, having reached agreement with Mr. McKeough, the City of Toronto made formal application to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) for approval of a Zoning By-Law and Official Plan Amendment for the Harbourfront lands. Hearings began in November and were adjourned to February 1992.

Before the OMB can approve the application, Harbourfront Corporation and the developers must agree on relocating proposed developments from lands south of Queen's Quay West, and the City and Harbourfront Corporation must concur on the transfer of lands and money. If the OMB approves, and the Province lifts the zoning freeze, the Zoning By-Law and Official Plan Amendment will come into effect, facilitating full implementation of the Royal Commission's 1989 recommendations on the matter.

The second Royal Commission recommendation is also being addressed. The Official Plan and Zoning By-Law includes, for example: provision to designate more than 16 hectares (40 acres) of Harbourfront land as public park; permits a school on the east portion of Bathurst Quay, permanent community and day-care facilities on Bathurst Quay, the nautical centre to continue its activities on the Maple Leaf Quay and to relocate in part to John Street Quay; and replaces residential building site designations south of Queen's Quay West. In addition, the City has approved urban design

criteria for building parcels in the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law and in specific Urban Design Guidelines.

The third and final Royal Commission recommendation on Harbourfront Corporation addressed implementation of the recommendations and transitional arrangements for management of the residual real estate interests. The approving of the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Amendments and the lifting of the provincial zoning order on Harbourfront lands will allow disposition of the remaining Harbourfront and Crown non-program real property assets. As well as using proceeds from those sales to endow future programming, Harbourfront '90 will be free to seek out funding from such sources as the Canada Council or the private sector; pending establishment of Harbourfront '90's endowment, the federal government has agreed to make available to Harbourfront Corporation \$8.8 million in each of three years, beginning in 1991.

Harbourfront '90 will be challenged to match future programming plans to available income; one way might be by seeking co-operation from other entities on the waterfront in joint endeavours that take advantage of Harbourfront '90's programming skills and experience.

## **TORONTO ISLAND AIRPORT**

The federal mandate given the Royal Commission specifically asked it to examine the future of the Toronto Island Airport (TIA) and related transportation services. Subsequent public hearings, held in early 1989, identified a number of issues including: access from the mainland, introduction of jet aircraft, noise, expansion of facilities and services, balancing general aviation and scheduled carrier use, as well

as management of the airport and subject lands. Ideas about the TIA's future ranged from phasing it out as quickly as possible to expanding it as much as possible. A detailed examination of these issues was needed before any recommendations could be made on the TIA's future.

In Publication No. 7, *The Future of the Toronto Island Airport: The Issues*, Royal Commission staff described the airport's origins and history, reviewed submissions to its January and February 1989 public hearings, and described some of the approaches it considered when reaching conclusions about the TIA. This was intended as the basis for further thought and discussion at the scheduled June 1989 public hearings; final recommendations were incorporated in the Commission's 1989 interim report.

## **A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

The Toronto waterfront has been a factor in Canadian aviation since 1909, when the first amphibious aircraft landed at the Toronto harbour. By the 1920s, the Toronto waterfront was seriously being considered as a site for commercial aviation but it was 1937 before the City of Toronto approved construction of two municipal airports and, with the federal Department of Transport, agreed to locate a municipal airport on the Toronto Islands; the facility near the relatively distant village of Malton was merely a back-up in case of fog. (With its first terminal housed in a quonset hut, Malton expanded rapidly and, in 1983, was renamed Lester B. Pearson International Airport.) The City was responsible for half the construction costs of both projects and asked the Board of Toronto Harbour Commissioners (THC) to oversee construction and to operate the two airports.

In 1939, the City of Toronto leased its Malton operations to the federal Department of Transport but, at the Toronto Islands, the THC continued to act on its behalf as administrator and operator. During World War II, TIA became a Norwegian air base and, in the years following, as Malton grew, was used principally as a facility for training operators of light, private, and commercial aircraft.

In 1957, the City transferred ownership of Malton to the federal Department of Transport, in return for which the department promised to make major improvements to TIA's airport facilities; in 1961, the TIA site was extended east and west by lakefill and the promised facilities were built. The City agreed that the THC would act as principals in operating the Island Airport and, in July 1962, leased lands at TIA to the THC for 21 years.

TIA operations were generally unprofitable and, in 1974, the federal government agreed to the THC's request for a subsidy, subject to intergovernmental agreement on the airport's future. In March of that year the Joint Committee-TIA was convened, with representatives from the federal, provincial, Metro, and City governments, and from local community organizations.

The TIA Intergovernmental Staff Forum (ISF) was established in 1975 to provide technical assistance to the Joint Committee and to evaluate alternative uses for the airport; in turn, the ISF was directed by a Policy Steering Group, consisting of the federal and provincial ministers of transportation, the federal Minister of State for Urban Affairs, the Chairman of Metro Toronto, the Mayor of the City of Toronto, and the Chairman of the THC.

After examining a wide range of possible uses for the airport site, the ISF analysed three in detail: it could be used for general aviation only, general aviation and Dash 7 STOL service, or recreational use with or without housing.

In March 1977, when the ISF tabled its findings, the federal, provincial, and Metro governments favoured the general aviation/STOL option while the City wanted general aviation only. Further discussions did not resolve the disagreement.

Between February 1980 and March 1981, the Canadian Transport Commission (CTC), an independent body established to give the federal Minister of Transport advice on licensing commercial air services, held hearings on an application by Canavia Transit Inc., one of five carriers applying to operate STOL services between the Toronto Island, Montreal, and Ottawa. The City of Toronto intervened, on the grounds that changing Toronto Island Airport into the City's second commercial airport would run counter to municipal efforts to promote recreation and housing on the waterfront. Moreover, the City said, the costs of a STOL service would exceed any benefits it could provide.

The CTC concluded that the adequacy of air services in the Toronto/Montreal/Ottawa triangle should not prevent licenses for new carriers that would provide more convenient services to the travelling public and further justified the decision on the grounds of present and future public convenience and necessity.

Although the CTC was satisfied that a need existed for the service, it did not award a licence, both because of the City's opposition to the STOL and to construction of the necessary STOL infrastructure, and because



Transport Canada had not committed itself to upgrading the TIA or providing such infrastructure.

The airport's future remained uncertain until February 1981, when Toronto's City Council recommended that it accept advice given by the mayor: reach an agreement with the federal government and the THC to develop the airport for general aviation and limited commercial STOL service, provided the City's waterfront objectives can be protected.

In June 1981, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the federal Department of Transport, the City of Toronto, and the THC, setting out conditions under which limited STOL passenger service could be established at the TIA. Two years later a 50-year Tripartite Agreement, which superseded the MOU, was signed by the City, the THC, and the Department of Transport, providing for continued use of City land at TIA for a public airport for general aviation and limited commercial STOL service. Under the agreement, jet-powered flights are permitted only for medical evacuations, emergencies, and during the Canadian National Exhibition Air Show. The agreement was amended in July 1985 to permit operation of the de Havilland Dash 8 aircraft at TIA.

The Toronto airport system comprises Pearson International, Toronto Island, Buttonville, and Downsview airports. (Existing airports in Hamilton, Oshawa, and Barrie were not included in the Royal Commission's analysis.) Of the two Toronto facilities serving a significant number of passengers — Pearson and Toronto Island — the latter represents about three per cent of total Toronto traffic and about five per cent of total domestic traffic. From 1977 to 1988,

total movements at Pearson ranged from approximately 200,000 to 350,000, while they ranged from approximately 150,000 to 200,000 at TIA. More than half those at TIA were local, while the majority at Pearson were itinerant (i.e., travelling from one city to another).

The TIA is a regional facility: one, according to Transport Canada's definition, that supports a CTC class 1 single-plane service to a national or international airport, as well as direct non-stop scheduled or charter services to at least three other airports.

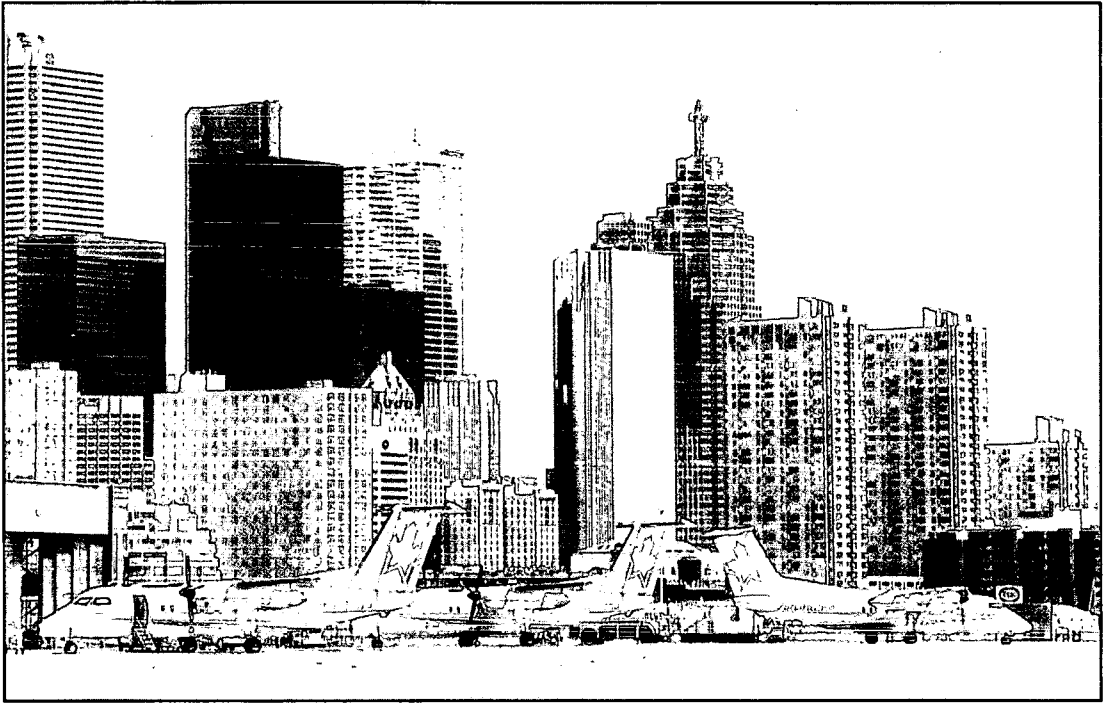
The majority of scheduled aircraft operating at TIA are turboprops. Because of closer proximity to downtown Toronto's business district, turboprops there can compete over longer distances with the generally faster turbojets operating from Pearson.

Because of the Western Channel, surface access to the airport has always been by passenger and vehicle ferries; improving surface access to Toronto Island Airport is a time-honoured subject of formal and informal studies. However, none of the many recommendations has ever actually been implemented, because the unanimity required by all parties is lacking.

The 1983 Tripartite Agreement forbids a fixed-link access in the form of a vehicular tunnel, bridge or causeway. It should also be noted that the Province, in keeping with its policy of providing surface access to airports, defrays the operating losses of the airport ferry. Commercial parking space for approximately 125 vehicles is provided on the mainland by the THC.

## **OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL**

Ownership of the 87-hectare (215-acre) TIA site and its facilities is quite complex.



*Toronto Island Airport*

The jurisdiction in the original Crown grants and conditions changed over time, as the result of site expansion by lakefill in 1938 and 1962, changes that occurred when Metro came into existence, and the granting of leases.

The THC owns the largest portion of TIA lands: 65 hectares (162 acres) of land and 68 hectares (168 acres) of water. The City of Toronto owns a total of 19 hectares (48 acres) of land and 6.5 hectares (16 acres) of water. The federal government owns two small land parcels with a total area of two hectares (five acres). Parkland and waterlots south and east of the airport are owned by Metropolitan Toronto while unfilled lots west of the area are owned by the City and THC and are controlled by the Province.

In 1957, the City relinquished Malton Airport to the federal government in exchange for major improvements to TIA; it

agreed that the THC would operate the TIA as principals and, in July 1962, leased all lands located at the airport to the THC for 21 years. On expiry of this lease, the Tripartite Agreement came into effect.

In 1974, the THC realized that airport revenues did not cover the combined operating costs of the airport and the airport ferry and asked the federal and provincial governments for subsidies as an alternative to closing the airport. Ottawa agreed to assume the TIA's operating losses until its future could be decided and the Province agreed to defray the operational costs of the ferry.

Under the 1983 Tripartite Agreement, the federal government is to consider requests to offset any deficits incurred by the THC in operating the airport during the term of the lease. If the City or the THC, because of a lack of funds, advises the minister it no longer wishes to be financially

responsible for operating the airport, Ottawa has 90 days to indicate whether Transport Canada will take over operations. If the minister declines, the airport must be closed and lands currently owned by the federal government revert to the City; the City also retains the option to purchase the THC lands.

## THE ISSUES

Since the 1970s, environmental issues have figured prominently in intergovernmental discussions on the airport, including many meetings about noise, urban design, and the City's concern that the airport might have an adverse effect on other waterfront uses, such as recreation and housing.

Noise is still the primary public concern, while there is little public comment about such consequences of the airport's presence as soil and water contamination from aircraft fuel, cars, and buses; lakefill; chemical pollutants; and run-off.

Several mathematical models have been developed to express, in a single index, the combined effect of the variables that influence human response to noise. One model, the Noise Exposure Forecast (NEF), has been adopted in Canada for controlling land use in the vicinity of airports. NEF values do not indicate actual noise levels but are a measure of the probable psychological response of an affected community to the actual noise generated by aircraft movements at a given location near an airport.

Official NEF contours are prepared by Transport Canada and published by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

as a guide for land-use planners. There is no statutory requirement for compliance with these standards, and no airport is legally required to operate in the manner assumed for purposes of preparing the noise forecasts. The significant NEF value for the TIA is 28, as stated in the Tripartite Agreement, which defines the maximum level of noise-related activity permitted as being tolerable to residents. According to the official 1990 NEF contour map, there are no residents living within the 28 NEF Contour. (See also the section on the Lower Don Lands.)

During its public hearings, the Royal Commission listened to different views on the TIA's dual role as the location for general aviation and limited STOL service: whether it should be maintained as is or give priority to one type of use over any

other; whether the ferry is a bottleneck or a safety valve — which seems to depend on whether people think the airport should remain at

its present size or be expanded — whether there should be a fixed link, for vehicles, pedestrians, or both; and whether TIA needs to be managed by a body other than the Toronto Harbour Commissioners.

The Royal Commission found no overwhelming public demand for any change in the airport's current role and made the following recommendations in its 1989 interim report:

- The Toronto Island Airport should continue its dual role serving general aviation and air commuter operations within the Tripartite Agreement.

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*The Royal Commission found no overwhelming public demand for any change in the airport's current role*

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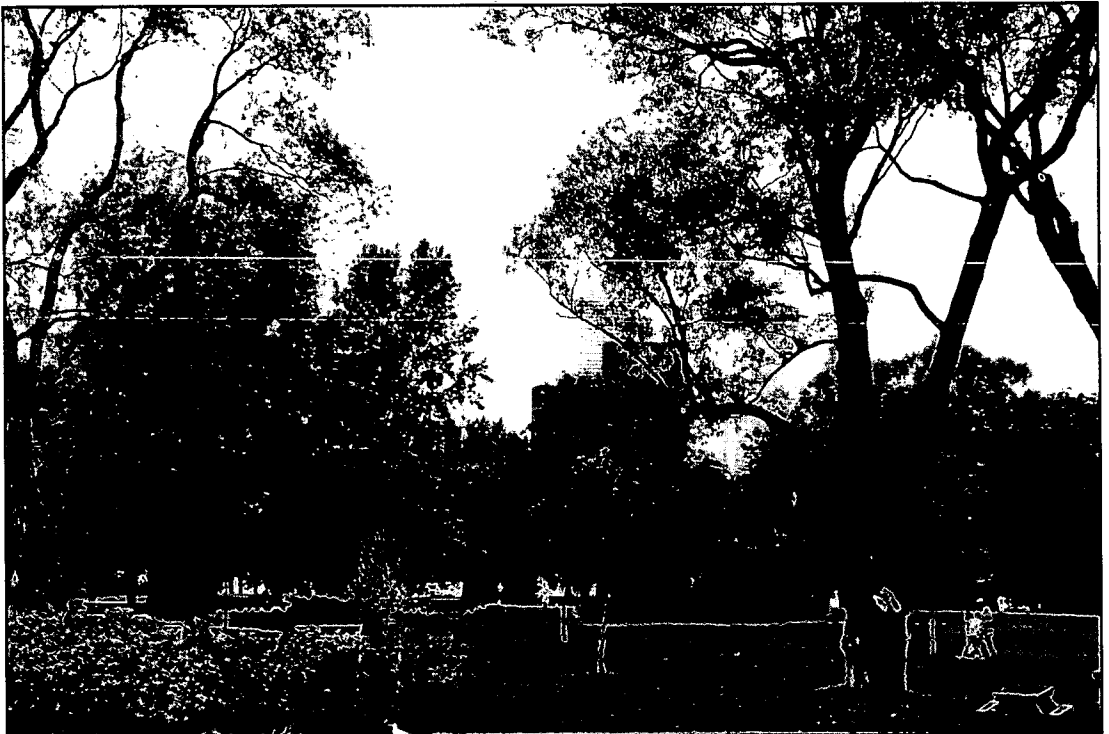
- The City of Toronto, in consultation with Transport Canada, should consider whether to keep or replace the Toronto Harbour Commissioners as its agent in the management and operations of the Airport.
- Irrespective of the response to the previous recommendation, the City and Transport Canada should require improvements in the management of the Airport, including a new financial and accounting base and improved public and user consultation processes.
- A new plan should be prepared to reflect the role of the Airport as contemplated by the Royal Commission, ensuring that it remains at its existing scale within the waterfront environment, is cleaner and quieter, and is sensitive to the needs of its users.

In response to the recommendations, both the City of Toronto and a provincial-municipal committee commissioned studies to examine these and other related airport issues. Results are now being reviewed.

## **TORONTO ISLANDS**

The Toronto Island Airport sits on the westernmost portion of Hanlan's Point, itself the westernmost of the Toronto Islands. Only two kilometres (1.2 miles) from the hustle and bustle of the city's financial core, the 14 islands, with their sheltered lagoons, ever-changing sand dunes, and stands of cottonwoods remain a unique sanctuary for city dwellers — in the words of M. J. Lennon (1980), author of *Memories of Toronto Island*: "10 minutes and 1,000 miles away".

When Governor Simcoe arrived in 1793 to carve the City of York out of the dense forest that lined Lake Ontario's shore,



*The Toronto skyline still in sight, the islands offer a refreshing change of pace and scene*

the islands were part of a 5.5-kilometre (3.5-mile) long peninsula that curved from the mouth of the Don River south and westward into the lake, where it formed a sheltered harbour. The peninsula was known to the natives as having curative powers; to Elizabeth Simcoe, these were her “favourite sands”, to which she would retreat for healthy recreation — picnicking, painting or horseback riding.

Since the Simcoes’ time the islands have continued to play a vital role in the recreational life of Torontonians. In the early 1800s, adventurous hunters and fishers used the peninsula to fish, trap muskrats, and shoot waterfowl. By 1833, Michael O’Connor had opened the first hotel — the Retreat; one of the hotel’s selling points was its access by the first ferry — the horse-powered *Sir John of the Peninsula* — which eliminated the need for the arduous trek across the untamed mouth of the Don River. By the 1840s, fishermen’s huts were scattered over the peninsula, and shortly thereafter, the first hardy homesteaders set up permanent camp.

Some ten years after the peninsula was severed from the mainland by a violent storm in 1858 to become “the Island”, the City began to promote development there. The first summer house was built in 1872 by a prominent barrister, and thereafter many of Toronto’s most distinguished citizens erected elaborate summer homes on Hanlan’s Point and Centre Island.

Near the cottages at Hanlan’s there was an amusement park; in the summer tens of thousands flocked daily to ride its roller-coaster, see the famous diving horse, watch baseball or lacrosse in the stadium or stroll along the boardwalk. The islands and the harbour provided endless opportunities

for diversion — in the summer there was swimming, canoeing, rowing, fishing, and sailing, and in the winter, sledding, skating, and ice-boating.

The summer population of the islands expanded in the early 1890s when a tent community was erected at Ward’s Island; by 1931, the City had allowed the tents to be supplanted by permanent dwellings. Thereafter, the number of year-round residents gradually grew, especially during the housing crisis following World War II, when additional dwellings were built on Algonquin Island.

In the 1950s, the islands had a “main street” on Centre Island, where there were hotels, a dairy, a barber shop, a hardware store, and a movie house. The three communities — Hanlan’s, Centre, and Ward’s — had community centres, sports teams, newspapers, and social functions. People lived on the islands year-round, sending their children to the Island School, commuting to the city by ferry in summer, tugboat in winter. There were people who lived on the islands, the man who delivered ice among them, who proudly claimed they hadn’t been to the city more than a half-dozen times in their lives.

Just as the Toronto Islands have always been buffeted by the natural forces of wind and water that both shape and threaten them, they have been buffeted by human forces. For 150 years plans have been developed for the islands by successive city councils, harbour commissioners, and others. In the 20th century, most such plans envisaged dramatic changes in land use: apartment buildings linked to the city by tunnel and surrounded by parking lots, expressways running the length of the islands, or docks and warehouses for port activities.

In 1953, the newly created Metro Council developed the idea of turning the islands into a park and recreation area. Despite the vociferous arguments of island dwellers, by 1965 Metro had completed eviction procedures, compensated residents, and bulldozed 500 homes. The residents of the remaining 260 houses on Ward's and Algonquin islands decided to dig in and started a long and bitter fight to stay. Arguing that residential and recreational uses were not incompatible, the islanders fought eviction in the courts of law and public opinion.

In order to resolve the dispute, on 9 December 1981 the Province of Ontario introduced Bill 191, which was designed to allow the island community to remain until 2005. Ultimately, however, the Bill

proved to be unworkable because it did not resolve such fundamental questions as ownership of the houses. In the fall of 1991, the Province gave notice that it would bring in new legislation for the islands, and that the legislation would create a Land Trust to act as landlord, and would permit as many as 110 new homes on the islands. Such legislation could help

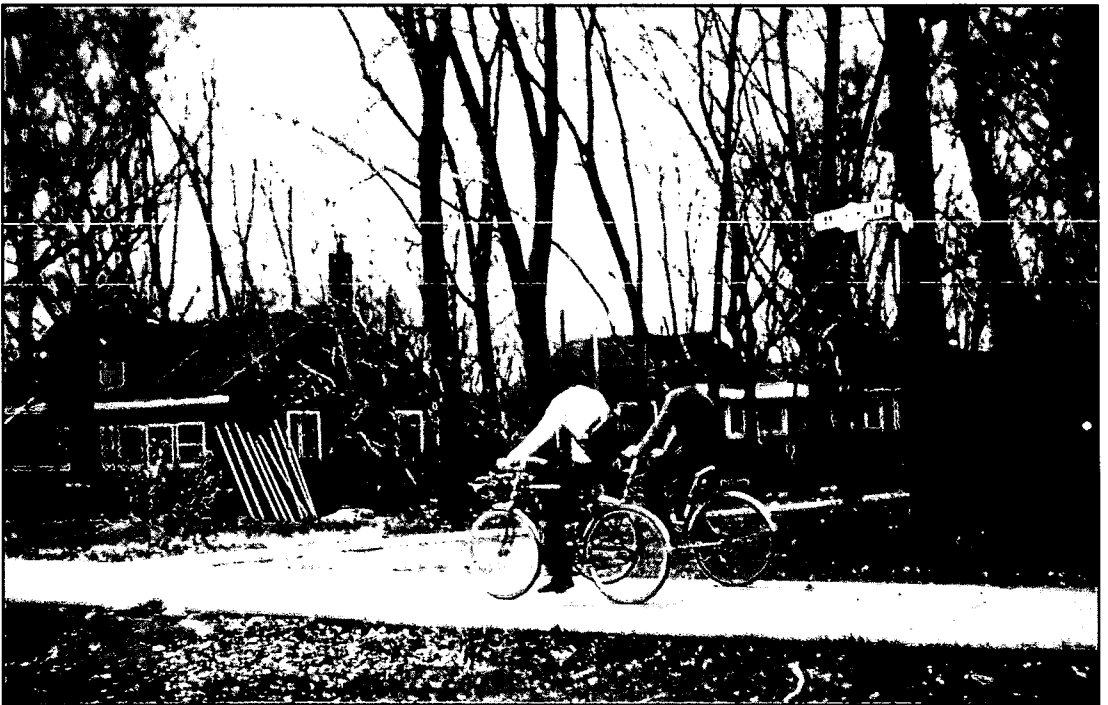
resolve the situation and provide much-needed security for the existing community.

Today's Toronto Islands are a rich, if somewhat under-used, regional resource. Their environmental resources include lovely dunes and beaches, regionally rare plant forms, and varied fish communities. The visitor can find clipped grass for picnicking and ball-playing, quiet lagoons in

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*Today's Toronto Islands are a rich, regional resource with lovely dunes and beaches, regionally rare plant forms, and varied fish communities.*

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*Houses on Ward Island*

which to watch turtles basking and night herons fishing, as well as opportunities for walking and bird-watching. There are active recreational facilities at Centreville, at the Long Pond rowing course on regatta days, and at the public marina and three yacht clubs.

Seven hundred people live in a vibrant, close-knit, car-free community on Ward's and Algonquin, and provide "eyes on the park". A water filtration plant services the city in the summer when water use is greatest. The live-in Island Natural Science School offers opportunities for Toronto students to spend an intensive week in natural science study. The Gibraltar Point lighthouse, built in 1808 on earlier orders from Governor Simcoe, stands as a historical link to the founding of the city, a reminder of the days when ship travel provided vital links between Toronto and the outside world. The lighthouse looks out over the island park to which Metro is trying to attract more visitors, a residential community poised for growth, and towards the evolving and changing waterfront of the City beyond.



## **LOWER DON LANDS**

The Lower Don Lands are another sizeable part of Toronto's Central Waterfront that is clearly in transition. While usually thought of first in relation to shipping, heavy industry, bulk storage, and transportation, the Lower Don Lands have another side — a swath of green hugging the north shore of the Outer Harbour along Cherry Beach, to link up with the urban wilderness of the Leslie Street Spit.

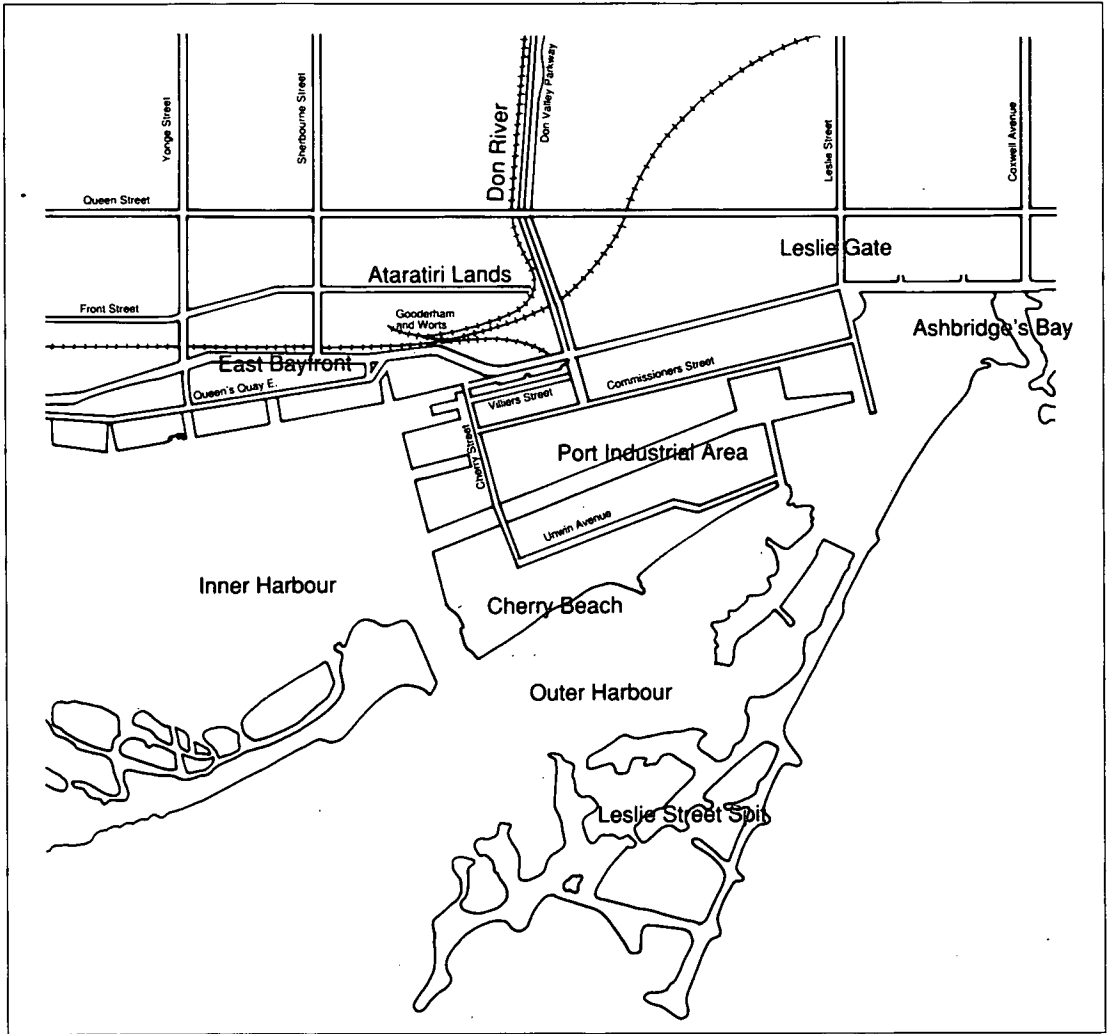
Two hundred years ago, the Lower Don Lands could have been considered an

ecological unit: they comprised the lower reaches of the meandering Don River, the estuary at its mouth, and the peninsula to the south. The banks of the Lower Don were lined with water-loving trees and shrubs and surrounded by a forest of mixed deciduous and coniferous trees. The forest helped recharging of groundwater, controlled the rate of flow into the Don, prevented erosion of the banks, kept feeder streams cool, and helped to maintain a diverse fish community.

The river was the source of drinking water for mammals in the area, as well as providing spawning and feeding habitats for fish and other forms of aquatic life. The estuary at the mouth of the Don, known for many years as Ashbridge's Bay Marsh, was an ever-changing landscape of marshy vegetation, islands, and open water; it provided habitats for mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, and reptiles. The waters of the marsh were protected from those of the open lake by the peninsula, a natural sand bar that was breached during a fierce storm in 1858 to create today's Eastern Gap and the Toronto Islands. With the advent of European settlement, the organic unity of the Lower Don Lands was gradually eroded; today, having lost sight of the whole, we tend to think of the lands in terms of their separate pieces, as defined by roads, rail lines, and concrete dock walls.

There are six main components: the Lower Don, Ataratiri, the East Bayfront, the Port Industrial Area, the semi-natural areas of the Leslie Street Spit and the Outer Harbour's north shore, and the parklands of Ashbridge's Bay. While the future of the Lower Don Lands is unclear, there is no doubt that the area is on the verge of dramatic change. This section presents one vision of what that change could encompass.

## Map 10.10 Lower Don Lands



The boundary of the Lower Don River Valley is generally considered to be just north of the Bloor Viaduct. A great deal of the valley is used for utilitarian purposes — an expressway, two railways, an arterial road, utility right-of-ways, snow dumps, a few remaining heavy industries, transformer stations, and storage yards. Chain-link fences line the shores of the river, and log booms at its mouth contain the flotsam that surges down the river during rainstorms. Water and sediment quality in the river is poor,

as is wildlife habitat. Access to the shores is limited and uninviting, and only a few hardy souls walk or cycle along it.

Ataratiri is the name given to lands bounded, roughly, by Eastern Avenue on the north, the Don River on the east, the CN railway lines on the south, and Parliament Street on the west. At present, the area is occupied by a number of industrial users including railway yards, warehouses, factories, and scrap yards. In July 1988, the City of Toronto entered into an



agreement with the Province of Ontario to develop 7,000 units of housing in the area, the City acting as planner and developer, and the Province as guarantor of funds necessary to acquire and develop the site.

The City now owns the entire 32.5-hectare (80-acre) site, having expropriated more than 40 private properties and having purchased the remaining third of the site from CP Rail and Canadian National Realty. Over the past three and-a-half years, the City has concentrated on the necessary planning needed to develop the land and design the future community. A great deal of time and money has been spent on assessing environmental conditions in the area and proposing solutions for the significant problems encountered there.

The East Bayfront is the area between the harbour and the Gardiner/Lakeshore Corridor between Yonge Street and Cherry Street. It is best characterized as a transportation corridor — a route to somewhere else, and currently not truly a “place”. The East Bayfront is dominated by the Gardiner Expressway and Lake Shore Boulevard, which visually and practically cut off the areas to the north from the harbour.

Although the East Bayfront has been home to important port-related industry since it was created by lakefill in the 1950s, it has been declining for the last 30 years. Most marine terminals and wharfs are gone and the only remaining industrial uses are Redpath Sugar, and Lake Ontario Cement, together with the LCBO’s storage and distribution facilities.

The Port Industrial Area lies south of the Gardiner/Lakeshore Corridor between Cherry and Leslie streets; it was built on lakefill placed in the former Ashbridge’s Bay Marsh at the foot of the Don River, in accordance with the Toronto Harbour Commissioners’ 1912 plan. The area was intended as Toronto’s industrial heart — its link by ship, rail, and road to the outside world. That expectation was never fulfilled, however, when World War I and then the Depression intervened. Instead of being a manufacturing centre, the area came to be used mainly for bulk storage of coal, cement, and petroleum products. In recent years, many of the noisier, dirtier industries have left the area and it is ripe for change.

At the southern edge of the Port Industrial Area lies a thin strip of green, the semi-natural areas of the harbour’s north shore; the western end is anchored by Cherry Beach, one of Toronto’s cleanest beaches, which attracts bathers and board-sailers. Farther east, rowing and boating clubs hug the north shore and north of them is a vegetated strip of land through which the Martin Goodman Trail

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*Left largely alone, the spit has evolved from a barren expanse of fill to become a rich and unique series of semi-natural habitats.*

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weaves. This area provides good-quality and varied habitat for wildlife, and attracts naturalists, cyclists, joggers, and walkers. Further east is the Leslie Spit, which was created by lakefilling. Left largely alone, the spit has evolved from a barren expanse of fill to become a rich and unique series of semi-natural habitats. A marina built by the THC to provide facilities for recreational boating protrudes into the Outer Harbour from the spit.

## VICTORY SOYA MILLS

In 1943, industrialist E. P. Taylor was looking for a site on which to build a new soybean processing plant to alleviate the wartime shortage of fats and oils caused by food and petroleum rationing. He had been named president of Victory Mills Ltd., a new company created from the Sunsoy Products branch of Canadian Breweries Ltd. Victory Mills soon leased a site at the southeast corner of Fleet and Parliament streets, ideally placed to receive and send shipments by rail, truck or boat. The plant built there was designed to extract and process soybean, linseed, and other vegetable oils to create products for human and animal consumption, as well as other products that would be processed further by other industries to make such goods as glue, paint, printing ink, and soap.

Despite wartime and post-war shortages of materials, construction of the new plant began almost immediately on the land, owned by the Board of Toronto Harbour Commissioners. Concrete silos were built first so that stockpiled soybeans could be available for processing as soon as the screw-press and solvent-extraction processes were ready to go into production. These silos have presided over the eastern edge of Toronto's harbour ever since.

The plant officially opened on 27 March 1946, and in 1947, Victory Mills purchased the site, as well as an adjoining parcel, from the THC. Over the years, the plant changed ownership twice: in 1954, Victory Mills was sold to Procter and Gamble Co. and renamed Victory Soya Mills, and in 1980 the company was resold to Central Soya Inc. of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The importance of this processing plant should not be underestimated: the fact that it had been built, combined with a concerted campaign to encourage farmers to grow soybeans, precipitated immediate growth in the soybean market. In 1940, Canada produced 6,000 tonnes (220,000 bushels) of soybeans; by 1953, that figure had risen to 120,000 tonnes (4.4 million bushels). Demand for soy products changed little during the 1950s and '60s, then surged again during the 1970s, when people became aware that the consumption of vegetable fats was healthier than that of animal fats. In 1990, 25,000 soybean growers in Ontario produced 1.3 million tonnes (47 million bushels) of soybeans.

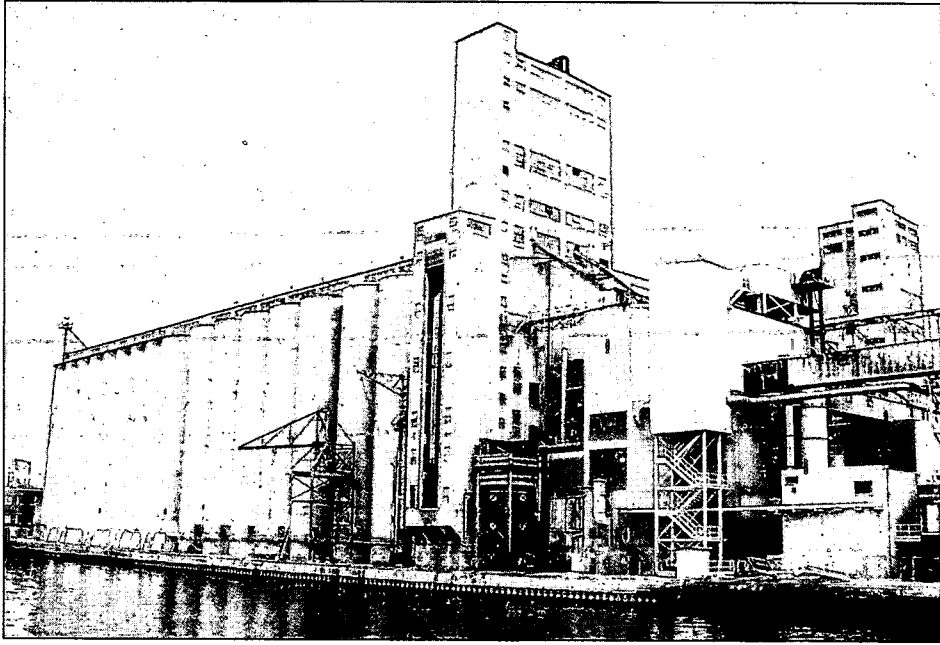
At the time it was closed in March 1991, Victory Soya Mills Ltd. was handling 400,000 to 540,000 tonnes (15 to 20 million bushels) of soybeans annually. The largest of three crushers in Canada, it processed soybeans into oil for margarine, cooking oil, and protein supplements for livestock feed.

Central Soya Inc. ceased plant operations, citing poor profits because of the Canada-United States free-trade agreement, government subsidies to a competing product (canola seed), and high municipal taxes.

Other conditions had also changed since E. P. Taylor carefully chose the plant's location: proximity to railroad and waterborne facilities is no longer advantageous in an era when road transportation dominates the movement of goods. Moreover, the Toronto waterfront was so developed that the plant was plagued with traffic problems.

To date, the site has not been sold. It is not hard to imagine what will happen when it is: now on the edge of the city core, the site will be redeveloped. The question is whether a way can be found to build for the future without razing our industrial past.

Sources: Stinson, J. and M. Moir. 1991. Built heritage of the East Bayfront. Environmental audit of the East Bayfront/ Port Industrial Area phase II, technical paper no. 7. Toronto: Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront. Draft.



*Victory Soya Mills*

East of Leslie Street is the Main Sewage Treatment Plant, a major employer in the area, and currently the subject of upgrading and expansion plans. The remainder of the Lower Don Lands — the lakefill parklands known as Woodbine Park and Ashbridge's Bay Park — are separated from the rest by Coatsworth Cut and the sewage treatment plant and are also disconnected from the residential neighbourhoods to the north. However, these parks, which include a marina as well as attractive landscaped areas in which to play, relax or picnic, are well linked to

the Beach farther east by a boardwalk and greenspace.

Most of the Lower Don Lands are in limbo, with many former activities gone or in decline, and many recent studies and plans, in varying stages of completion, directed towards revitalizing this strategically placed area of the City.

In September 1991, in keeping with its plans to develop housing in Ataritari, the City released its assessment of the environmental conditions in the area, along with a Part II Official Plan Proposal. The City has also addressed the Lower Don Lands in its

Cityplan '91 process and in the Gardiner Expressway East/Don Valley Sweep Civic Design Study (1990). The City of Toronto's Task Force to Bring Back the Don released its vision for the Lower Don Valley in August 1991.

Metro has made several studies of transportation in the Lower Don Lands (among them the Waterfront Transit Light Rail Extensions Feasibility Study (1990), and the Long Range Rapid Transit Network Study, which is a background study for Metro's new Official Plan); in addition, there is the *Revised Report on Metropolitan Interests in the Port Area*, development of a new Metropolitan Waterfront Plan, proposals to convert the Commissioners Street incinerator to an expanded recycling and transfer station, and Metro's environmental assessment for the Main Sewage Treatment Plant, in conjunction with a comprehensive report on the metropolitan sewage system.

The private sector is also active in planning for parts of the Lower Don Lands. For example, studies and proposals have been made for the Gooderham and Worts site, adjacent to Ataratiri; LeslieGate at the northeast corner of Lake Shore Boulevard and Leslie Street; expansion of the Lever Brothers property at the foot of the Don Valley Parkway; and several large sections of the Port Industrial Area, including St. Lawrence Park in its northwest corner, and Castlepoint at Polson Quay.

The THC prepared its Port Industrial Area Concept Plan in 1988 to foster economic development of this area, improve public access, and ensure the Port's future. A joint study of the economic impact of the Port of Toronto on the City of Toronto and surrounding jurisdictions was recently

conducted by the Province, Metro, the City of Toronto, and the THC.

The roles of the THC and the Port of Toronto have also been studied extensively by the Royal Commission. Early in its mandate, the Commission realized it was time to formulate a new vision of the East Bayfront/Port Industrial Area. Because of concerns about pollution in the area, in its first interim report, the Commission recommended that an environmental audit be carried out on the lands. To protect the integrity of the Commission's study, on 17 October 1989 the Government of Ontario designated the area as one of Provincial Interest under the Planning Act. The process used to undertake the environmental audit was the Commission's first attempt to put the ecosystem approach into practice; the result was a persuasive example of how effectively this approach can be applied to research, analysis, and interpretation of information.

## **THE ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT PROCESS**

The environmental audit of the East Bayfront/Port Industrial Area was conducted from November 1989 to December 1991. Its purpose was to develop the best possible description and understanding of the environmental conditions in the East Bayfront/Port Industrial Area (within the inevitable limits of time and budget). It should be emphasized that this environmental audit was done before any decisions were made about future land uses — itself a radical departure from the norm.

Most land-use planning starts with a piece of land. In time, a developer comes along with an idea for a project — a condominium, an office tower, a mall — to put on

that piece of land and if the environment is considered, it is through an environmental assessment of the project. The proponent considers what impact the project will have on the environment, and how that impact can be reduced or mitigated. One of the drawbacks of that way of planning is that it can lead to inappropriate uses of land.

By contrast, the environmental audit's first priority was to collect information on environmental conditions so that better decisions could be made later. In fact, the environmental audit team was not involved in decision-making about the future of the East Bayfront/Port Industrial Area: with the environmental information before them, however, others would be able to make fully informed decisions about land use.

A second fundamental difference in the Commission's environmental audit was its use of the "ecosystem approach" as a framework for research, analysis, and interpretation of information. As discussed earlier, the ecosystem approach focuses on relationships and examines how an area influences, and is influenced by, areas outside it. It also examines the effect of human actions on the ecosystem and, conversely, the possible effects of ecological conditions on human health. The ecosystem approach allowed the Commission to move beyond the compartmentalizing of traditional environmental management: instead of examining the state of the environment, the audit examined the state of the ecosystem.

In order to measure ecosystem health in the East Bayfront/Port Industrial Area,

the team had to develop criteria, appropriate for the area, and for which information was available. Criteria and indicators used elsewhere were reviewed, including those in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, the healthy cities concept, the Ecosystem Charter developed by the Rawson Academy,

the Metro Toronto Remedial Action Plan goals, and the principles set out in *Watershed*.

Because humans are recognized as an integral part of the ecosystem, some criteria selected

by the team were human-centred (anthropocentric) as well as biocentric. The criteria used included:

- habitat diversity, quantity, connectedness, and quality for wildlife;
- diversity and abundance of wildlife species;
- complexity of the food web;
- the presence of introduced species;
- adequate reserve of nutrients;
- levels of toxic chemicals in the ecosystem;
- effects of toxic chemicals on humans and wildlife;
- levels of dust, odours, and noise;
- variety, quality, and accessibility of opportunities for human activities;
- safety from environmental hazards;
- connectedness with the past; and
- aesthetics (urban form, perception of environment, natural features).

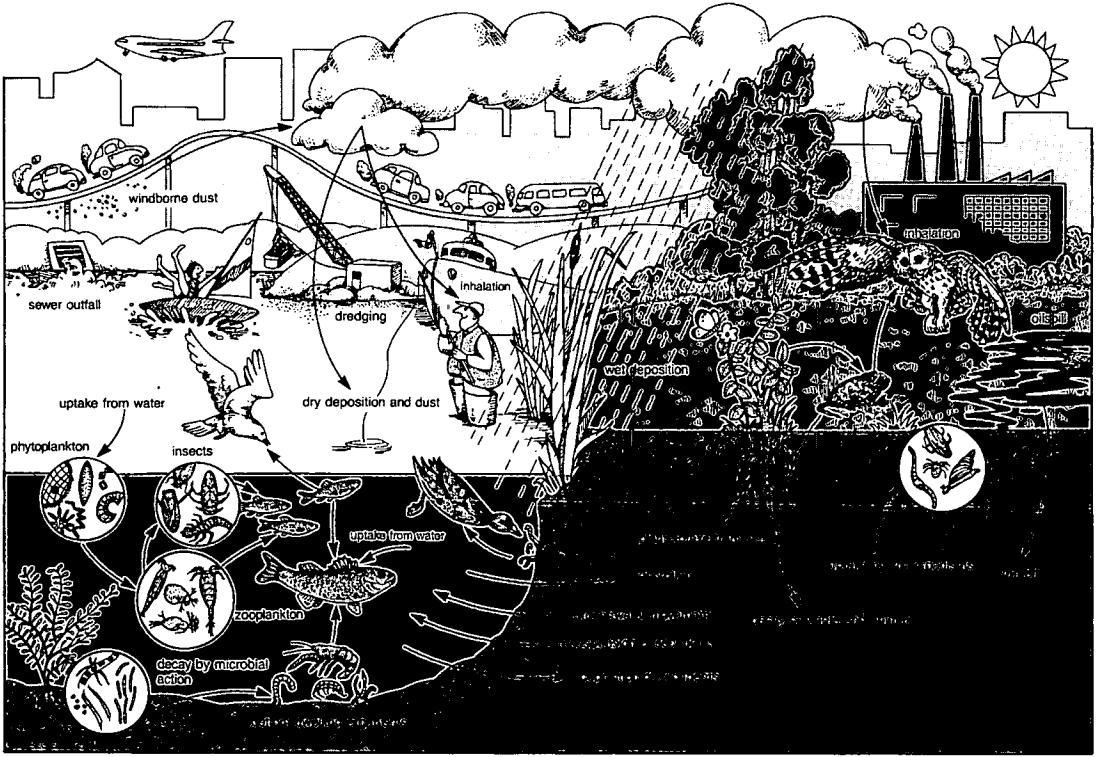
The way the audit was conducted was a third departure from the norm: in Phase I,

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*The ecosystem approach allowed the Commission to move beyond the compartmentalizing of traditional environmental management: instead of examining the state of the environment, the audit examined the state of the ecosystem.*

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**Figure 10.2 Ecosystem pathways**



five work groups of experts collected existing information (and produced technical papers) on the atmospheric environment, water, soils and groundwater, natural heritage, and built heritage. During Phase II, working under the overall direction of a steering committee, seven work groups undertook further research to fill many previously identified gaps in data; they produced technical papers on the atmospheric environment, built heritage, hazardous materials, natural heritage, soils and groundwater, water and sediments, and ecosystem health.

In carrying out the audit, the Royal Commission was able to draw upon a wealth of talent and expertise. 93 people were involved in the steering committee and working groups: 53 public servants from

four levels of government and agencies; 18 citizens from non-governmental organizations; seven from universities; three representing industry and labour; and 12 consultants from different fields. The work groups included staff from the federal and provincial governments, Metropolitan Toronto, and the City of Toronto. Also represented were the Toronto Harbour Commissioners, the Toronto Historical Board, the South East Toronto Industrial Awareness Organization (SETIAO), the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, a number of community and environmental organizations, and ambulance, fire, and police services.

Significant effort went into attempts to integrate the results of the various working

groups. Periodic meetings allowed members from different disciplines to interact and share information. Linking up these work groups were two “integrators”, to ensure that work group members from each discipline recognized how its findings related to the concerns of others. For example, the integrators might ask members of the air group how air quality is affected by soil, industry, and transportation, or how it affects soil, water, wildlife or humans. The integrators later synthesized and interpreted all the information collected by the various disciplines, and the results were published in two reports, *Environment in Transition* (1990), which covered Phase I of the audit, and the audit’s final report, *Pathways* (1991).

## **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LOWER DON LANDS**

Many of the characteristics connecting different parts of the Lower Don Lands to each other can be considered both challenges and opportunities. The areas:

- share an interesting history;
- are generally underused;
- lie predominantly in the floodplain of the Don;
- have similar environmental problems;
- have poor links to the rest of the City; and
- for the most part, are owned publicly.

Over the last two centuries, human activities have dramatically shaped the physical environment of the Lower Don Lands. Where one now finds recycling plants or cranes, there was once a fertile marsh at the mouth of the Don River. Two hundred years

ago natives fished with spears by lantern light in the Ashbridge’s Marsh. European settlers caught fish, muskrats and turtles there, and market gunners shot fowl for the citizens of York. Simple frame cottages hugged the Lake Ontario shore.

The industrialization of the Lower Don Lands began in 1831, when James Worts came from England and established a grist mill at the eastern end of the harbour; the following year, Worts’s brother-in-law William Gooderham arrived in York. The two went into business together and, in 1837, converted their flour mill to a distillery. As Gooderham and Worts, it operated until 1990, and left behind a cluster of industrial buildings of great historical and architectural value — one of the most important historic sites in Toronto.

By the 1880s, Ashbridge’s Marsh was polluted from untreated human, animal, and industrial wastes, and its condition was becoming a civic concern. In response to the problems in the marsh and ongoing navigational problems in the harbour, the newly formed Toronto Harbour Commissioners (THC) drew up a plan to reclaim the northeast corner of the harbour and the marsh. The plan, unveiled in 1912, featured state-of-the-art docks, broad tree-lined avenues, and modern factories linked to the outside world by ship, rail, and road. The Port Industrial Area was to be Toronto’s industrial centre, on land created from sand dredged from the bottom of the lake by the *Cyclone*, a massive dredge in what was considered one of the great engineering feats of its time.

The meandering Lower Don River was straightened and confined to a concrete channel, with a new mouth, an abrupt right-angle turn into the Keating Channel and

## ASHBRIDGE'S BAY

Ashbridge's Bay, once one of North America's most important wetlands, was named after a family who came from Pennsylvania to the Town of York in 1793 and settled on the east bank of the Don River near the outflow into the bay. Today all that remains of the once-vibrant marshlands are the memories set down by hunters and naturalists who used the 520-hectare (1,285-acre) marsh.

When the Ashbridge family received its grant of land, the bay was a patchwork of large and small ponds with weedy lagoons, bogs and islands of bulrushes, water-lilies, arrowhead, marsh marigolds, cane grass, and duck weed. The Don River meandered through the delta marsh it had helped create. Shallow warm water, nutrients from the Don, and lush vegetation created ideal habitat for hundreds of species of wildlife. Early settlers "saw ducks so thick that when rising from the marsh they made a noise like thunder" (Barnett 1971).

The bounty of the marsh provided the small settlement of York with wild game. Less than a century later, with the invention of the breach-loading shotgun, hunters were able to slaughter wildfowl by the hundreds. Frank Smith, a member of the Toronto Ornithological Club from 1942 until his death in 1965, recalled how Bill Loam, a market shooter who made his living hunting and fishing in the marsh, would "come into his boathouse at night with the boat so full [of ducks] that there wasn't room for one more" (Fairfield 1991).

Frank Smith himself hunted in the marsh and said:

I have seen thousands of Muskrat houses built in it at one time and am safe to say that as many as ten to twelve thousand rats would be taken in one spring. . . . It was a problem catching Mud Turtles. The best way was undressing and taking a sack, walk in the water up to your armpits and when you stepped on a turtle you would duck under, get him and put him in the sack [sic]. I have taken as many as seventy-five to a hundred in one day in this way and sold them in the market for turtle soup (Fairfield 1991).

In the 1850s, storms broke through the sandy peninsula that separated the marsh from the lake, creating the Toronto Islands. Subsequent erosion problems induced the City in 1890 to build a breakwater on the western edge of the marsh, closing water circulation between marsh and harbour.

Sealed off from the lake, and the recipient of large quantities of industrial, human, and animal wastes, particularly from Gooderham and Worts's cattle byres, the bay became stagnant and polluted. Coatsworth Cut was opened at the east end of the marsh to improve circulation but a more permanent solution was proposed: fill the marsh to create lakefront industrial land.

In 1912, the City accepted plans by the Toronto Harbour Commissioners, and by 1930 garbage, building rubble, and sediment dredged from the harbour covered most of the marsh. The remainder was filled in the 1950s to make way for the Main Sewage Treatment Plant. Ashbridge's Bay, once home to a complex and rich wildlife community, has been replaced by salt and coal storage, oil tanks, industrial buildings, and vacant lots.



Nonetheless, thanks to benign neglect, a wide variety of plant and animal species have colonized these vacant lots and the north shore of the Outer Harbour. Together with the natural communities on the Leslie Street Spit and the hoped-for rehabilitation of the mouth of the Don River, these natural areas in the Port Industrial Area would symbolically revive the natural heritage buried beneath the soil.

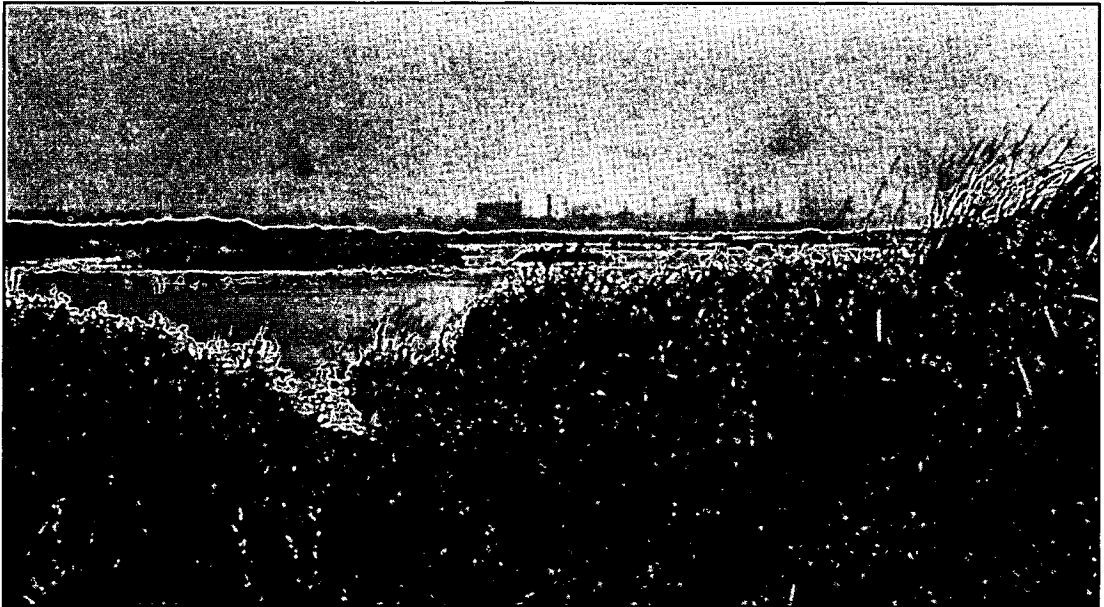
Sources: Barnett, J. M. 1972. "Ashbridge's Bay." Ontario naturalists 9(7); Fairfield, G. (ed). 1991. *Ashbridge's Bay*. [Unpublished manuscript].

Inner Harbour. The river delta was replaced by new industrial lands, with docks, a ship channel, and a turning basin, as well as road and rail connections to the rest of the City.

Creation of the East Bayfront started much later, in the 1950s, after complicated negotiations among the Harbour Commissioners, the City, and the railways. The new land was used for docks, wharfs, and shipping-related industries, such as Redpath Sugar.

The physical restructuring of the Lower Don Lands continues today. Additions are

still being made to the Leslie Street Spit, the four-kilometre (2.5-mile) long peninsula created from lakefill and begun in the early 1960s as a protective breakwater for an Outer Harbour. It soon became clear that Toronto had no need of a second harbour, and the spit has developed through natural succession into a rich wilderness area. The most recent land creation project in the Lower Don Lands is the Outer Harbour Marina, begun in 1986, to provide mooring slips for recreational boats, and a marina centre at the base of the breakwater.



*Ashbridge's Bay with Toronto in the background*

Though the splendour of the THC 1912 plan has faded, a rich industrial heritage remains: the plan's "armature" — the docks, bascule bridges, Ship Channel, bridges, railways, and roads — still forms a strong pattern on the land. Large structures such as silos, cranes, chimney stacks, and fuel storage tanks are dominant landmarks evoking past and some present industrial activities. The Gooderham and Worts buildings, the Palace Street School at the corner of Front and Cherry streets, and the former Bank of Montreal on Cherry Street are unique and worth preserving for their architectural merit. The industrial heritage manifested in the area's infrastructure and built form — in the grand scale of Commissioners Street, the pattern made by docks and seawalls, the cranes and tanks — should be treated with respect and, where possible, be used as the basis for future development.

The location of the Lower Don Lands is still strategic — minutes from downtown Toronto — but the area is underused, shabby, and neglected. Expropriations in Ataratiri have left blocks of empty buildings. Many industries, once long-term tenants in the East Bayfront/Port Industrial Area, have also departed, leaving behind empty structures or barren lots. On average, Toronto's industrially designated lands provide jobs for 79 people per hectare (32 people per acre); by contrast, density in the Port Industrial Area is only 11.6 employees per hectare (4.7 employees per acre).

The Lower Don Lands also provide a wide range of recreational activities: sailing,

rowing, and boardsailing clubs cluster along the north shore of the Outer Harbour, larger boats are moored at the Outer Harbour Marina and Ashbridge's Bay Park, and Cherry Beach remains one of the Central Waterfront's cleanest for swimming. Naturalists haunt the area, while joggers, hikers, and cyclists use the Martin Goodman Trail, and some venture up the Lower Don Valley. Nonetheless, many of these recreational amenities are underused, in part because access is difficult and unattractive.

Virtually all the Lower Don Lands lie in the floodplain of the Don. If there were another regional storm of the magnitude of 1954's Hurricane Hazel, large parts of the area would be flooded to a depth of as

much as one metre (three feet) of water, with some places being affected even more seriously. Modelling undertaken for the Ataratiri Environmental Evaluation Study showed that almost 3,800 dwelling units,

and more than 900 businesses employing more than 23,000 people, are vulnerable to flooding in the Lower Don floodplain.

Under the Flood Plain Planning Policy Statement issued by the ministries of Natural Resources and Municipal Affairs, new development that is susceptible to flood damage is not normally permitted. However, municipalities may apply for special policy area status that allows controlled development in areas where new development cannot be restricted. The City of Toronto has applied for a special policy area in the Lower Don floodplain to permit development

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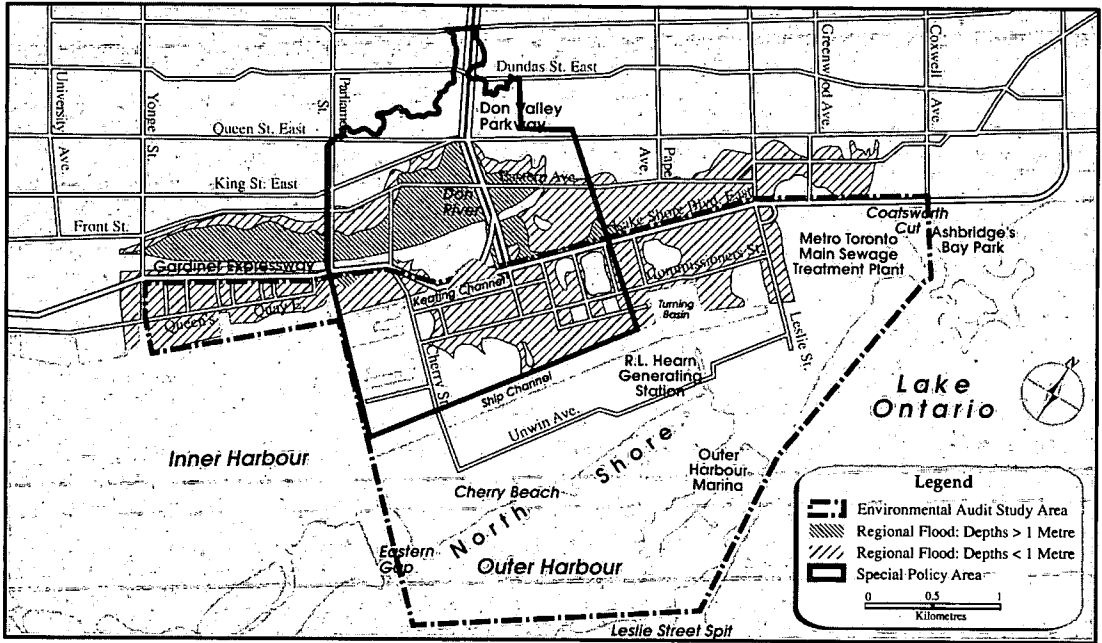
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*The industrial heritage manifested in the area's infrastructure and built form — in the grand scale of Commissioners Street, the pattern made by docks and seawalls, the cranes and tanks — should be treated with respect, and used as the basis for future development.*

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## Map 10.11 Lower Don flood plain



of Ataratiri, and a variety of measures are being considered to reduce the flood risk there.

The Lower Don Lands share other environmental problems: in many places, soils are contaminated with heavy metals and organic chemicals, in part because of the way lakefilling was done. For example, the Port Industrial Area was created from construction debris, sewage sludge, incinerator ash, and municipal garbage, as well as from sand. Construction of the Leslie Street Spit utilized earth fill from downtown Toronto (some of which was undoubtedly contaminated), and also rubble, incinerator and fly ash, and crushed battery casings. In the rail corridors, the Ataratiri lands, and the Port area, problems were compounded by spills, leaks, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials. When soil is contaminated, it is likely that the groundwater beneath it is contaminated as well.

The environmental audit of the East Bayfront/Port Industrial Area found some contamination of soils and/or groundwater at 27 of the 28 sites studied by the Royal Commission and by others (out of a total of 123 sites in the area). Although it is difficult to generalize — types and levels of contaminants vary greatly from site to site and across individual sites — these studies show that the soils and groundwater at some places are heavily contaminated. The MOE's clean-up guidelines are exceeded for a number of heavy metals: while there are no provincial guidelines for specific organic compounds, studies show that benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene, xylene, PAHs, and PCBs are present. At some sites, groundwater is contaminated with heavy metals and organic compounds as well as with free-phase floating petroleum products.

According to the *Ataratiri Draft Environmental Evaluation Study Report*

(Clarkin 1991), soil samples from more than 250 places in Ataritari showed that about half the area does not currently meet guidelines for housing, commercial or industrial uses. Pollutants include metals, organic compounds such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and coal tar. The highest levels of contamination occur in the western part of the area, where a coal gasification plant operated until the 1950s.

As in any industrial area, several thousand hazardous materials are used, stored or transported in the Lower Don Lands. Although there is insufficient information available to assess risks posed by these hazardous materials, the environmental audit showed that, in the past two years alone, 73 spills and fires involving hazardous materials were recorded in the East Bayfront/Port Industrial Area.

Because the area is dominated by industry and transportation, air quality is poor in the Lower Don Lands. Odours from industry and the sewage treatment plant are a problem for nearby residents, and fugitive emissions of dust, volatile organic compounds, and metals from industry and traffic are a concern. Near the Gardiner/Lakeshore Corridor and the Don Valley Parkway, preliminary modelling indicates that exceedances of provincial guidelines are likely for carbon monoxide, suspended particulates, and dustfall. Little is known about emissions or levels of trace organic compounds in the air.

Smog, including ground-level ozone, is a problem in the Lower Don Lands, as it is across southern Ontario, especially on sunny days in the late spring and summer.

In both Ataritari and the Port Industrial area, noise is high enough to be a concern for residential use, but can

be reduced to acceptable levels through building design and other measures. The major sources of noise are the traffic in the transportation corridors and, in the Port area, take-offs and landings from the Toronto Island Airport.

The levels of dust, odours, and noise along the north shore of the Outer Harbour are lower than in the industrial areas because so much of it is in recreational land uses.

In the Lower Don, Keating Channel, Inner Harbour, Ship Channel, and Turning Basin, water quality is poor and bottom sediments are contaminated with nutrients, heavy metals, and organic chemicals. Few fish can live in these waters, although overwintering waterfowl congregate there because the water is warmer than elsewhere.

The water quality in the Outer Harbour is generally better than in the Inner Harbour, and sediments are cleaner. Unlike other Toronto beaches, Cherry Beach is rarely "posted", warning people not to swim.

Toxic chemicals are found in aquatic biota including benthic organisms, fish, and aquatic birds. There are restrictions on eating some sizes of eight species of fish found in the Lower Don Lands.

On land, the north shore of the Outer Harbour, the Leslie Street Spit, and several vacant lots in the industrial area have a variety of natural and semi-natural areas including beach and gravelly shorelines, wet meadows, open fields, willow thickets, stands of cottonwoods, and other habitats.

Thanks mostly to benign neglect, these areas have evolved to contain a mosaic of habitats in different stages of succession, providing excellent areas for breeding and migrating wildlife. Information collected for the environmental audit shows that they

support a fairly complex food web: in the north shore area alone, there are some 330 species of plants, 260 of birds, 19 of fish, 12 of mammals, two of amphibians, one of snake, and 27 of butterflies. Similar numbers have been recorded for the Leslie Street Spit.

In contrast, the industrial areas of Ataratiri and the East Bayfront/Port Industrial Area are characterized by few kinds of habitats. Most are poor-quality — the occasional field between roads, parking lots, and industrial or commercial buildings. As a result, they support limited wildlife and a simple food web.

Moreover, although there is good-quality wildlife habitat, particularly in the southern parts of the Lower Don Lands, the spatial connections among habitats are poor. This is the case in east-west connections and, even more, in north-south connections with the important Don Valley corridor.

Links for human movement in the Lower Don Lands are just as poor as the wildlife habitat connections. The Gardiner/ Lakeshore Corridor effectively severs lands to the south from residential areas to the north. The Port Industrial Area is further cut off from the City by the Keating Channel. The Ataratiri area is effectively a cul-de-sac, constrained on three sides by the railway lines, the Don River, and the Adelaide Street ramps to the Don Valley Parkway.

Much of the land in the Lower Don Lands is publicly owned. The major landowners in the Port Industrial Area are the THC, Metro Toronto, and Ontario Hydro. The Liquor Control Board of Ontario and the Ontario Provincial Police are landowners in the East Bayfront; CN and CP own the railway corridor and the yards south of

Ataratiri. Ataratiri lands are now owned entirely by the City of Toronto.

In summing up the ecosystem health of the Lower Don Lands, it is fair to say that the area poses both significant challenges and opportunities for regeneration. The serious problems of contaminated soil and groundwater, air and water pollution, flood potential, dust, and noise must be addressed if the ecosystem is to be restored to health.

There are still significant gaps in our understanding of the environmental conditions in the area — gaps that must be filled. Moreover, jurisdictional, regulatory, and planning issues include a number of institutional obstacles that have contributed to environmental degradation and are road-blocks to remediation.

## **AN INTEGRATED PLAN FOR THE LOWER DON LANDS**

In light of the challenges and opportunities in the Lower Don Lands, and the many studies and plans for individual parts of the area, it became obvious to the Royal Commission that an integrated plan is needed; piecemeal planning cannot deal effectively with issues such as flooding and soil contamination, rehabilitation of the Don River, access, and the need to stimulate economic recovery. An integrated plan would make it possible to:

- retain and enhance natural and built heritage;
- increase the diversity and intensity of uses;
- reduce the risk of flooding;
- share technologies for soil cleaning;
- share programs to monitor air pollution;
- improve links to the rest of the City;



*Marsh and woodland habitat along the north shore of the Outer Harbour*

- ensure that publicly owned lands are used for the maximum benefit of society;
- integrate the various planning exercises now under way; and
- assist economic recovery in the region.

Such an integrated approach would allow effective (and cost-effective) solutions that might not be appropriate or possible in planning for only one part of the Lower Don Lands. Integrated planning for the area allows consideration of the whole, rather than of a number of disjointed parts, by multiple agencies with different agendas and priorities.

The Ataratiri project is an illustration of the pitfalls of starting with a chunk of land and setting out to create a “project” on it — without integrated urban planning and in the absence of a sound initial understanding of environmental conditions. Ataratiri is economically handicapped,

encumbered by the costs of land purchased at the peak of the real estate boom; in addition, before it can proceed, millions of dollars will have to be spent for soil clean-up and flood-proofing. The greatest encumbrance, however, may well be the “mega-project” mentality: the inflexible, “all or nothing”, predominantly single-use approach to development.

It may be tempting to view the Ataratiri site as if a single industry were simply being removed from an area that never had an urban pattern. But this land was once a piece of the city: it had streets, uses, activities, and history. Therefore, it makes little sense to treat it all at once and comprehensively. It would be better to develop housing in the area in a flexible, evolutionary way, as the “renovation” of an existing neighbourhood. Using this approach, changes would occur and improvements would be made, but the existing fabric would not be entirely eradicated. Life in the area would go on,

while regeneration took place. Such gradualism may be frustrating to those who have a strong desire to see everything done “up front” but it does get the job done, in a more organic and economical way.

Such a flexible and incremental approach to development should be applied throughout the Lower Don Lands, within an overall framework that includes:

- improvements to environmental health, including a “green infrastructure” of civilized streets, parks, squares, recreational facilities, and green links; a flood management strategy; and remediation of air, water and soil;
- a transportation plan that provides for the needs of those outside the area while respecting the needs of those inside it (i.e., provides a balance between “corridor” and “place”);
- a balance of land uses — residential, industrial, commercial, passive and active recreational — that integrates work and living places;
- a shared vision for economic development of the area, including clearly identified opportunities for private-sector participation and investment; and
- an integrated review and approval system.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

Given the environmental problems in the area, and current understanding of the need for a healthy environment, planning for the Lower Don Lands should begin with a strategy to restore environmental health. It would have four primary purposes: to lay out a “green infrastructure” of parks, open spaces, and green links; to address the

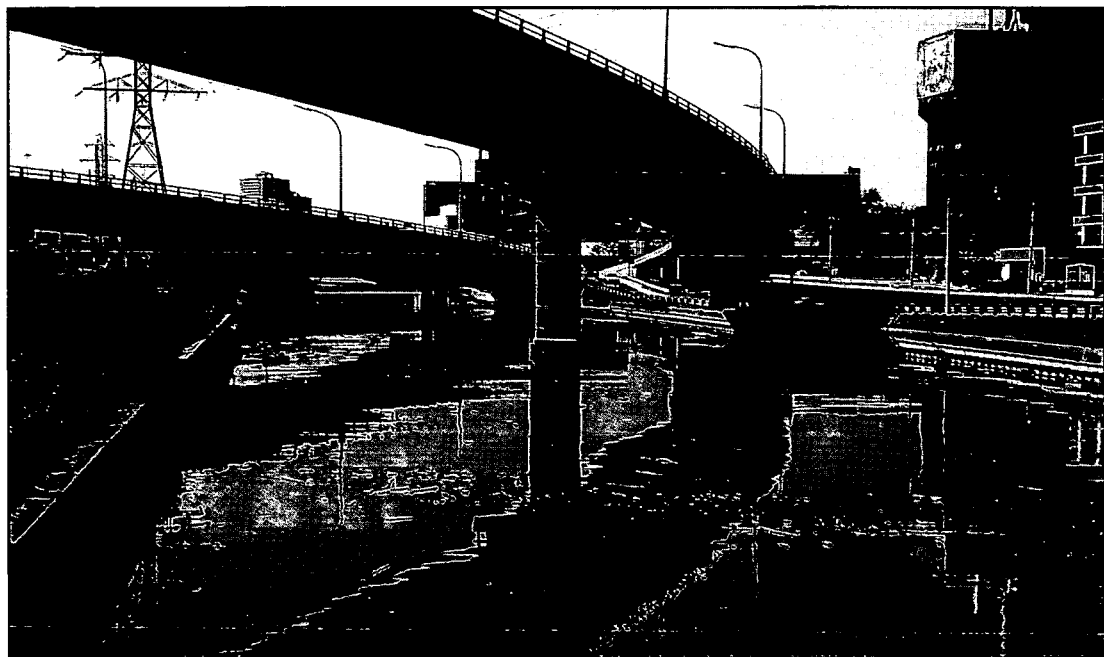
environmental problems facing the area; to minimize the impact of development on the environment; and to retain the area’s natural and built heritage. A plan can be built on the knowledge accrued in the many studies and planning processes that have taken place in recent years.

A restored, cleaner Don River is central to this green framework; many of the water quality improvements will come from work to be carried out throughout the watershed under the Metro Toronto Remedial Action Plan; the Task Force to Bring Back the Don has laid the groundwork for physical changes that would improve access, aesthetics, and habitat, and contribute to improved water quality. (They are described in “Healing an Urban Watershed: The Story of the Don”.)

In the Task Force’s plan, the upper reaches of the Lower Don would become the Rosedale marshes; a small stone weir would create a marsh headpond; side ponds would be dredged to create marshlands for fish habitat. The floodplain would include a

**The city contains in its form and functioning the traces of our history and of our collective memory; it holds the potential through which we can shape visions of our future. The strength of networks and partnerships lies in their potential to step outside the structures of conventional wisdom and the pattern of standard problem solving to formulate new problems and to articulate new opportunities.**

Jacobs, P. 1991. *Sustainable urban development*. Montreal: Third Summit of the World's Major Cities.



*The Lower Don*

mixture of wetlands, meadows, and forested slopes. Revegetation of the side ravines would improve wildlife habitat, and trails would encourage passive recreational uses such as hiking and nature study. South of the new marshes would be the more formal, urban character of the channelized river: the water's edge would be richly landscaped with trees; stairs and ramps would provide access to widened pathways, separated from the railways by dense plantings.

The improved Lower Don would get a new mouth, in the Port lands south of the one that exists, with a gradual curve opening up to a re-created estuary. The delta and marsh would provide new habitat for aquatic life, passive recreational and educational attractions for people, and a wonderful setting for other uses. A wildlife corridor would continue south from the Don's new mouth to link with natural areas along the north shore of the Outer Harbour. Varied habitats there would

be protected and enhanced, and would be linked to the extensive natural areas on the Leslie Street Spit.

Green corridors would be wide enough to provide buffers between wildlife and human uses, and native plantings would be used to encourage ecological development of vegetation. Newly linked parks and green spaces in the East Bayfront would provide western connections between Harbourfront's public areas and the Don River green corridor. On the Lower Don Lands' eastern side, green links would improve what is now an unsatisfactory tie to the lovely recreational areas of Ashbridge's Bay Park and the Eastern Beaches beyond it.

One of the major environmental problems affecting almost the entire Lower Don Lands area is the potential for flooding. While it is hardly a new concern, attempts to deal with it over the years have been "band-aid" solutions: encasing the river in concrete (to reduce erosion and speed the flow of



water), restricting new development in floodplains, and building berms do not address the root causes of high peak flows. Flooding has been exacerbated because the Don is used as a sewer to carry stormwater generated throughout the watershed.

An ecosystem approach to the flood problems on the Don would incorporate watershed-wide measures to reduce stormwater flow into the river. This fits with the goals and principles adopted under the Metro Toronto Remedial Action Plan, which includes measures such as use of stormwater detention ponds and redirection of residential downspouts from storm sewers to lawns. These may take longer to implement than other solutions, but they are probably cheaper, more equitable, and more beneficial in the long term.

Modelling shows that a severe storm would flood an area extending east from Yonge Street to a point past Greenwood Avenue, and would include most of the Port Industrial Area and the lands north to King Street. Obviously, there is a need to protect existing and proposed development in the Lower Don floodplain. The studies done for Ataratiri have identified a minimum flood protection package that would be needed before development could proceed; it includes placing fill on part of the Ataratiri site, widening the openings of four bridges over the Don, and constructing a floodway on the west bank of the Don River north of the Keating Channel. The costs of such measures should be borne by those who benefit from them.

Any plan to redevelop the Lower Don Lands must deal with the issue of contaminated soil and groundwater. A remediation strategy should be created for the entire area, building on the Royal

Commission's environmental audit, and the City of Toronto's Ataratiri Environmental Evaluation Study.

An integrated soil and groundwater management strategy for the Lower Don Lands will allow clustering of sites for clean-up and an incremental approach, rather than one that insists on doing everything, everywhere at once. Clusters of sites should be identified on the basis of similar kinds and degrees of pollution, the potential for migration of contaminants from one site to adjacent ones or to nearby surface water, and expected future uses. Careful consideration should be given to the depth of soil to be remediated and appropriate standards of clean-up in relation to future built form, landscape types, range of activities, and likely health risks. The strategy should:

- be based on comprehensive, numerical clean-up guidelines that can be applied to the entire area, and that are appropriate for the intended end uses;
- be developed after a thorough review of information on the techniques available for clean-up of soils and groundwater, including work being undertaken by the Toronto Harbour Commissioners;
- ensure that detailed, site-specific investigations of soil and groundwater are undertaken prior to sale, lease or redevelopment of parcels of lands, and before decisions are made on the amount and type of remediation required;
- include the research needed to provide a better understanding of groundwater movement and contamination sources; and

- include an investigation of soil and groundwater quality in the natural areas along the north shore of the Outer Harbour and the development of an appropriate soil management strategy for these areas.

There are, as well, economies of scale that can be realized by considering the problem of soil and groundwater contamination on an area-wide basis. In addition, the potential exists to turn a challenge — the need to treat contaminated soil — into an opportunity. A soil treatment facility located in the area could decontaminate soils from across the Lower Don Lands and anchor development of soil cleaning expertise and technology that could be exported elsewhere.

The environmental audit raised many questions about air quality, questions that are applicable to the entire Lower Don Lands area. For example, it recommended that studies be conducted to assess noise levels, levels of toxic contaminants in air, and air quality in the vicinity of the traffic corridors. Such studies should be carried out for the area as a whole, and planning should include measures to reduce noise and improve air quality throughout the area.

Development of the Lower Don Lands should be designed to improve environmental conditions and minimize harmful effects. This would include such measures as:

- decommissioning and cleaning up plants, equipment, buildings, storage tanks, and underground pipelines;
- designing buildings and landscaping to improve microclimatic conditions and reduce energy use for heating and cooling;

- promoting access to public transit and providing liveable, pedestrian-oriented places;
- taking measures to reduce the quantity and improve the quality of urban stormwater run-off;
- encouraging natural landscaping that provides wildlife habitat and reduces the energy, chemicals, and water needed to maintain manicured landscaping; and
- requiring industries remaining in or coming into the area to use best possible management practices to control dust, noise, and odours, to deal with stormwater, as well as with hazardous materials, and to ensure workplace health and safety.

An environmental strategy for the Lower Don Lands area should build on the full potential of the natural and built heritage of the area. Existing wildlife habitats should be restored, protected, and enhanced, with connections improved between and among the Don Valley, Cherry Beach area, Leslie Street Spit, and Ashbridge's Bay.

Buildings of architectural or historical merit should be retained and reused whenever possible; and important aspects of the area's industrial heritage should be integrated into redevelopment. These measures will help the evolution of a distinctive place with memory, variety, and depth, where buildings, patterns, and structures of all ages co-exist, and natural habitats flourish.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

As outlined in the section "Place and Corridor", the Royal Commission has recommended a program to integrate environment, land use and transportation in

the Central Waterfront. Such a program would serve both regional and local needs, including the relocation and redesign of the Gardiner, improved public transit, and the establishment of city blocks and local streets in areas that are now just large chunks of land.

The transportation plan for the Lower Don Lands should mesh with the overall plan for the Central Waterfront, and strike a balance between the transportation needs of those outside the area and those within it. This would include, for example, maintaining the railway line that serves Redpath Sugar. It should address the need to improve north-south links from the Lower Don Lands to the residential areas to the north, improve access by local public transit, and improve routes for cyclists. With better connections and improved aesthetics, the Martin Goodman Trail will become part of the Waterfront Trail.

A redesigned Gardiner/Lakeshore Corridor will make possible a more interconnected and people-oriented urban street network with the necessary traffic capacity, create an appropriate framework for redevelopment, and improve the quality of streetscapes in the area. The Ataritari Part II Official Plan Proposals recommend a pattern that incorporates existing streets and subdivides larger blocks to provide a finer-grained, more liveable framework for redevelopment.

It would be possible to build a Cherry Street GO station on a downtown LRT loop linked to a GO station at Garrison Common, to serve regional commuters. Improvements in local transit could include an eastern extension of the Harbourfront LRT, and improved bus service.

The other important transportation facility in the Lower Don Lands is the Port

of Toronto. The Royal Commission has given a great deal of attention to this issue. (See *Persistence and Change: Waterfront Issues and the Board of the Toronto Harbour Commissioners* (1989) and the Commission's two interim reports.) In May and June 1989, it held hearings on the THC's role, mandate, and development plans, at which it received many submissions on such issues as accessibility, health and environment, the Port, ownership and land use, and the lack of accountability by the THC.

Once a major Great Lakes port, the Port of Toronto now ranks sixteenth nationally in terms of tonnage, and serves the local region, rather than having a national role. The long-term reduction in port traffic reflects changes to the commercial marine shipping industry: Toronto no longer makes economic sense as a principal destination for shippers. Nevertheless, a commercial port will always be essential to certain industries, on the waterfront and elsewhere, which receive raw materials and ship by water.

**The experiences that places make available to people, as we're learning, are an inheritance that has been entrusted to our care. Guarding these experiences and championing them, as we're also learning, are skills that are natural to people — because each one of us has direct access to the experiences that pour into us at any moment. So getting good at replenishing the places around us will just need a small stretch in our understanding.**

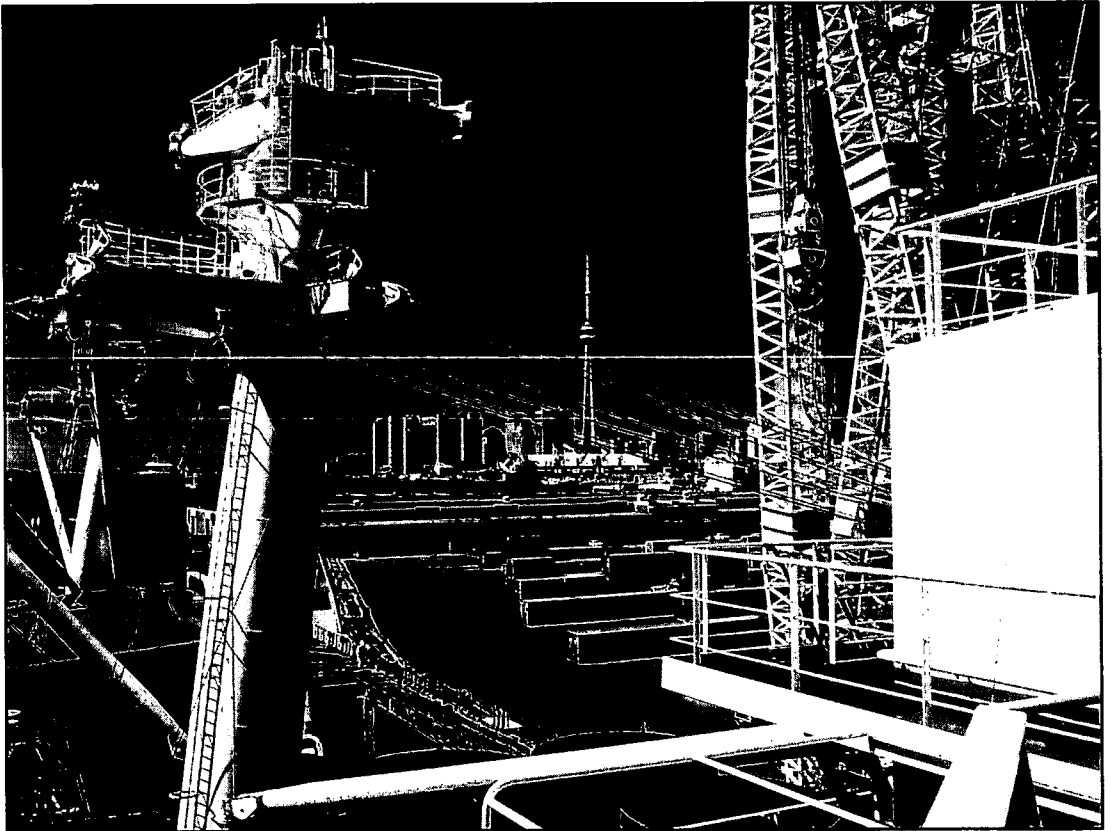
Hiss, J.: 1990. *The experience of place*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

In its first interim report, the Royal Commission recommended that the THC's responsibility, jurisdiction, and mandate to operate the Port of Toronto be clearly separated from planning or developing lands that do not serve the port function on the waterfront. In its second interim report, *Watershed*, the Commission recommended that the THC continue to operate the Port, and that the port functions be consolidated on 40 hectares (100 acres) of land in the western part of the Port Industrial area, south of the Ship Channel. The remainder of the Port Industrial Area would be used for clean industry or mixed uses. The Commission also recommended that the mandate of the THC be clearly defined and supported by a strategically sound corporate

plan, in order to rationalize use of public lands in the Port Industrial Area.

It has become apparent that there is a broad measure of support for strengthening the THC's accountability through amendments to the 1911 THC Act. The Royal Commission supports this approach. In late 1991, the THC entered into active negotiations to transfer lands surplus to its port operation requirements to the Toronto Economic Development Corporation (TEDCO).

In December 1991, the Honourable David Crombie, at the request of the federal Minister of Transport, agreed to bring together representatives of the THC, the City of Toronto, and the Department of Transport to produce a Memorandum of Understanding that will define the amount



*Toronto Harbour Commissioners marine terminal*

of land to be transferred from the Toronto Harbour Commissioners to TEDCO. It will also address the question of federal lands or jurisdiction, the possible future viability of the Port of Toronto, and any financial support that might be required.

## LAND USE

A change in land use is occurring across the Central Waterfront: what were once single-purpose zones of industry and transportation are becoming a pattern of mixed uses embracing commercial, residential, recreational, industrial, and transportation elements.

Three of the nine *Watershed* ecosystem planning principles are particularly relevant to the Lower Don Lands: diverse, useable, and accessible. There should be diverse landscapes, places, wildlife habitats, and uses. Planning for the future should provide a local balance of employment and residential opportunities, thereby decreasing the need for commuting. This would suggest, for example, that commercial and compatible light industrial uses (such as graphics and printing) should be woven into the fabric of the Ataritari site, just as they are now on King Street to the north. Finally, uses should permit public access and use of the water's edge.

Having mixed uses means there is a need to prevent conflicts in use: buffers have to be placed between sensitive uses and industry, especially sources of odours such as the Main Sewage Treatment Plant. They are also needed around sources of noise and air pollution such as the Gardiner/Lakeshore Corridor, the railway lines, and the Don Valley Parkway.

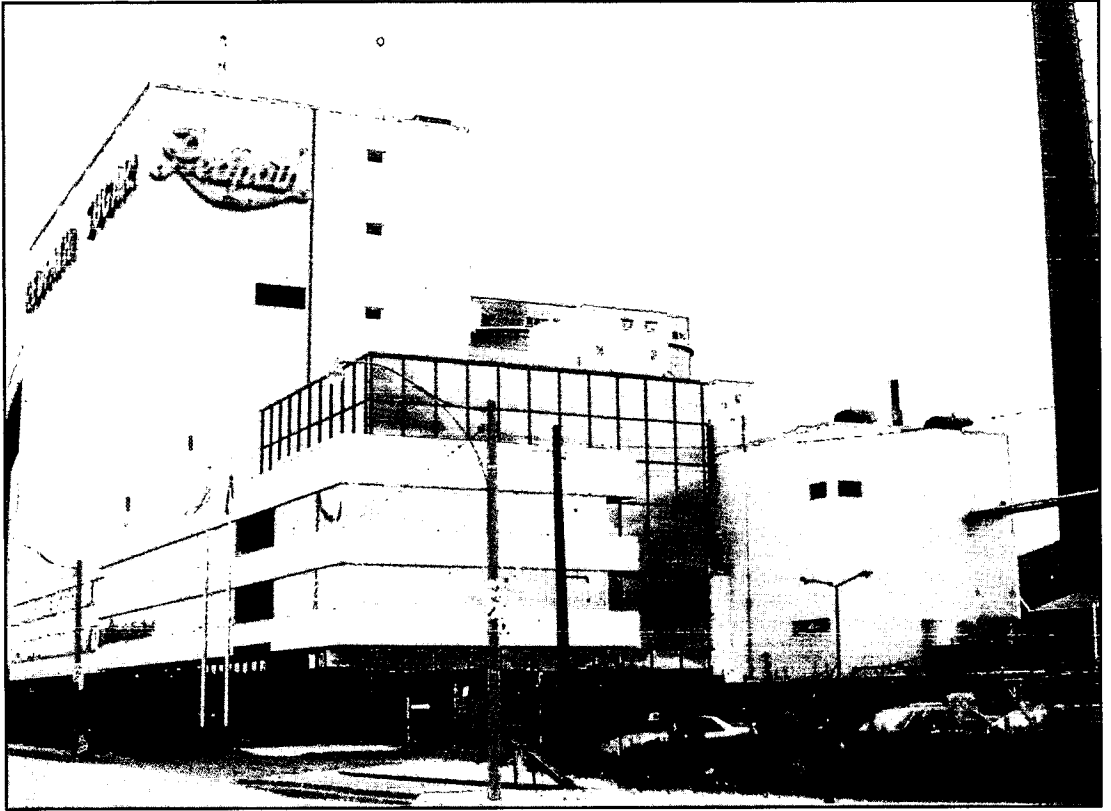
The City of Toronto's goal is to extend its physical centre to the waterfront.

Developing mixed residential lands at both ends of the Central Waterfront would be an appropriate bridge and/or extension of neighbourhoods in the Ataritari, Bathurst/Spadina, and Harbourfront areas. Moreover, it might make for greater flexibility in the Ataritari housing target, currently set at 7,000 units.

Given what we know about environmental conditions, not only in Ataritari, but in the rest of the Lower Don Lands, there is a need to examine whether there are better, cheaper places to build some of the units. For example, could some of the housing be put in the East Bayfront, or St. Lawrence Park East, or the northwest corner of the Port Industrial Area, in association with other uses? (Redpath Sugar is an example of an important and clean industry that could be incorporated into a changed and intensified landscape, with appropriate separation from any residential uses.)

Preserving industrial land, and the jobs it can provide, is another goal of the City of Toronto. In *Watershed*, the Royal Commission recommended that a new industrial park be created in the Port Industrial Area, to exploit the area's potential for creating thousands of waterfront jobs. (This Lower Don Industrial Area is covered in greater detail later in the section on economic development.)

As well as dealing with housing and industry, a plan for the future of the Lower Don Lands must consider recreational needs and possibilities. A revitalized Don River Valley and a new Don delta have enormous potential as locations for hiking and biking trails, as well as for interpretive and educational centres and displays. In *Watershed*, the Commission recommended



*Redpath Sugar in the East Bayfront*

that 80 hectares (200 acres) of the Cherry Beach lands on the north shore of the Outer Harbour be transferred from the THC to the City of Toronto. There has been progress in this regard: the THC has transferred approximately half the land to the City of Toronto, which is developing a plan for managing it, intended to strike a balance between the needs of people and of wildlife.

Plans for the Outer Harbour area, including Cherry Beach, the north shore, and the Outer Harbour Marina, should also accommodate the requirements, including security of tenure, of the member clubs of the Outer Harbour Sailing Federation. As recommended in *Watershed*, the Royal Commission believes that, to avoid further adverse effects on users of the area — naturalists, windsurfers, and community club sailors — the Outer

Harbour Marina should not be expanded beyond its current capacity of 400 slips.

The Leslie Street Spit is the only accessible area on the Toronto waterfront large and wild enough to be described as an urban wilderness. It supports an astonishing variety of plants and animals, including a number of rarities: it has been colonized by nearly 300 species of vascular plants, and attracts 266 species of migrating, wintering, and breeding birds. In order to protect the integrity of the spit as a habitat for wildlife, it should be kept car-free and reserved only for uses such as passive recreation that are compatible with its urban wilderness character.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

An economic development strategy is crucial to revitalizing the Lower Don Lands

and should include increased waterfront housing, increased employment opportunities in the area, and improved recreational facilities.

In the Ataratiri area, there should be greater emphasis on a wider variety of economic activities, including commercial, light industrial, recreational, and institutional uses, in addition to the current focus on housing. It may also be desirable to encourage temporary uses of some parts of the environmentally suitable land until the housing market improves. This would bring activity and some economic return, and help to demonstrate the desirability of the area.

If the market is allowed to respond to opportunities, synergies emerge. Once a sector is established in an area, it attracts spin-off uses; that will happen in Ataratiri, in the same way it has been occurring in the emerging design area at King/Parliament or the fashion district at King/Spadina. It is likely that entrepreneurs will see many interesting opportunities for a broad variety of

uses in Ataratiri, as in other parts of the "shoulders" of downtown Toronto.

Another focus for increasing employment opportunities in the Lower Don Lands is the Lower Don Industrial Area, which can be created east of the new mouth of the Don River in the old Port Industrial Area on the land formerly owned or administered by the THC. With a consolidated Port, the surplus THC lands would offer new possibilities and opportunities for economic diversification in the City of Toronto. That is why, in its *Watershed* report, the Royal Commission recommended that these surplus lands be used to create a new waterfront industrial area, containing a Centre for Green Enterprise and Industry, to be both developed and managed by the Toronto Economic Development Corporation (TEDCO).

TEDCO, created by the City of Toronto, operates under a provincial charter with a mandate to create jobs, particularly on underutilized or surplus City property. Its board is made up of men and women from the business, labour,



*Leslie Street Spit*

**Economic and ecological concerns are not necessarily in opposition. But the compatibility of environmental and economic objectives is often lost in the pursuit of individual or group gains, with little regard for the impacts on others, with a blind faith in science's ability to find solutions, and in ignorance of the distant consequences of today's decisions.**

World Commission on Environment and Development.  
1987. *Our common future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

environment, and public sectors. Management is able to fast-track the development process because of its intimate knowledge of the City's administrative workings.

While TEDCO's mandate is city-wide, it obviously is particularly important to the future of the new Lower Don Industrial Area. To be successful, industrial development agencies need to be at arm's length from the City and to have co-operation from municipal, business, and labour representatives. TEDCO is well placed in these respects: it is — and should continue to be — fully accountable to the City of Toronto, but it does enjoy an arm's-length relationship with the municipality. Its board should continue to include representatives from the City, Metro, business, environmentalist groups, and labour.

There are many waterfront opportunities for TEDCO: for example, it could collaborate with the World Trade Centre, which is part of a network of similar facilities in more than 50 countries. Importing and exporting "green technology" could be considerably enhanced by the World Trade Centre's expertise in promoting international trade and a new International Trade Centre

in Exhibition Place would be a logical place for exhibitions and trade marts of green technology.

Given the need to remediate much of the soil in the Port Industrial Area, there is an opportunity to test available and new soil clean-up technologies in conjunction with the Centre for Green Enterprise and Industry. Such testing has the potential to provide Canadian companies with marketable experience in an area of growing concern in most economies.

The Lower Don Industrial Area could, in effect, become a showcase for future-oriented industries, operating on an environmentally sound basis, as Toronto heads into the 21st century. And given the public's concern about the quality of the environment, the former THC lands could be used to encourage industries that have operations or products geared to environmental protection and improvement.

The key to the burgeoning environmental industries sector lies in recognizing that current environmental problems represent an opportunity to profit — quite literally — from past mistakes. There is a need for new products and processes that will repair existing environmental damage and prevent it in the future — everything from industrial scrubbers to closed-loop systems for manufacturing. According to estimates, there are now more than 3,000 companies in Canada, generating more than \$7 billion annually, that say they offer environmental products and services. In the United States, environmental industries do \$100 billion of business annually and are said to constitute the country's third-largest industrial sector.

In Europe, an estimated two million jobs are associated with environmental industries and, given the horrendous



environmental problems in eastern Europe, and rapid economic and political changes there, that number will probably rise rapidly. Furthermore, industrialization of the Third World will create an enormous demand for environment-related products and services.

If it is to play a major role in Canada's industrial future, Toronto must build and attract such industries — which is one of the tasks facing TEDCO. But merely competing for industry is not enough: Toronto has to be imaginative and daring enough to actually help create industries and products — and the jobs attached to them. To do this, it must provide a home for environment-related industrial research and development; a place where the growing number of people interested in the environment can get at least some of their training and education; where innovative techniques and products can be developed, tested, and manufactured; and where specialists in environmental marketing and distribution can be based.

Some of the industrial elements that might make up or contribute to a green industrial complex are already located in the Port Industrial Area: telecommunications, film, and television; electricity generation; and waste recycling, among others. In the winter and spring of 1989-90, the Commission sponsored two seminars on green enterprise and industry to explore development possibilities for these and other industries with government, business, labour, and academic experts.

As a result of these discussions, the Commission concluded that what is needed

is a catalyst to bring together the different sectors and interests and to convert potential into reality, to help make the Toronto of the 21st century what it has always been: a place of enterprise and industry, a liveable, workable city.

The catalyst could take the form of the proposed institute or a Centre for Green Enterprise and Industry, with its own building or buildings in TEDCO's Lower Don Industrial Area. Its mission would be to work with government, business, industry, labour, research scientists, environmentalists, and academic experts to promote green enterprise and industry in Toronto and in Canada.

It would seek out firms interested in research and development related to environmentally sound or environment-specific enterprise and industry. Such a centre should be offered as a milieu for the world's

leading scientists, from Canada and elsewhere, as well as for those involved in federal and provincial green industry development programs. On behalf of research and environmental agencies, they could develop projects appropriate to present and future needs and opportunities in the provincial and Canadian economies.

Among the federal agencies that should be encouraged to participate in and with the centre are: the Department of Industry, Science, and Technology; the Department of Energy, Mines, and Resources; the National Research Council; the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council; and Environment Canada. Provincial agencies should include the Ministry

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*The key to the burgeoning environmental industries sector lies in recognizing that current environmental problems represent an opportunity to profit — quite literally — from past mistakes.*

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## LESLIEGATE: RESPONSE TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION'S WORK

In 1990, IPCF Properties, a division of the Weston Group, proposed to intensify its use of a 2.4-hectare (six-acre) site at the corner of Leslie Street and Lake Shore Boulevard, currently occupied by a Loblaw's Superstore and an extensive parking lot.

However, it soon became apparent that the property, known as LeslieGate, has great local and subregional potential. Instead of pursuing traditional development options, IPCF decided to explore these possibilities within a development framework based on an ecosystem approach. Understanding that such an approach holds that "everything is connected to everything else", the framework seeks to link LeslieGate with the surrounding neighbourhood and, especially, with the waterfront.

A planning team began by examining the land use, built form, and physical environment of the surrounding neighbourhoods. The nearby area is predominantly mixed-use with residential — primarily low-rise, one-family houses mixed with the occasional apartment building to the north — and an industrial-commercial band along Eastern Avenue that extends south toward the lake in some parts.

The teams recommends integrating the LeslieGate site with surrounding communities through mixed-use development compatible with the existing scale: extending the urban grid south to the lakeshore, and providing at-grade pedestrian crossings. Offices, housing, and open space would be added to the Loblaw's store and parking lot to create a more diverse, economically and socially active centre for the area.

The team also suggests establishing a green corridor down Leslie Street to the Port Industrial Area. This "green, people-friendly" pedestrian spine, created by hard and soft landscaping, would ensure consistent treatment of the edge along Leslie, through the Port Industrial Area to the Leslie Street Spit.

Links to the waterfront would be enhanced by a "thoughtful, positive reinforcement of the pedestrian, cyclist, and vehicular connections across" and along Lake Shore Boulevard to Ashbridge's Bay. Connections between LeslieGate and the waterfront would be further improved if upper levels of future buildings on the site enabled people to see Ashbridge's Bay to the east and Lake Ontario to the south.

The kind of mixed-use development being proposed recognizes the growing importance of reducing distances between workplace, housing, and shopping. With the Loblaw's store remaining on-site, existing land uses would be maintained and a vital commercial enterprise would continue to contribute to the area's economic vitality.

IPCF Properties feels that LeslieGate can influence the future character of the area. Its location at the edge of the Port Industrial Area, near Cherry Beach and the Leslie Street Spit, gives LeslieGate potential as a gateway to the visual, recreational, and historical opportunities of the waterfront.

Source: Volgyesi + Propst Inc. 1991. *LeslieGate: a private sector response to ecosystem planning rational*. Toronto: Volgyesi + Propst Inc.

of Trade and Technology; ORTECH INTERNATIONAL (formerly the Ontario Research Foundation); and the Ministry of the Environment.

The centre would explore the possibility of attracting companies or organizations interested in gathering and disseminating information on environment-related statistics, experience, and trends. In helping to establish environmental information banks, TEDCO should work with the Greater Toronto Bioregion Research and Information Network (recommendation 24 in Chapter 3 of this report) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), as well as with other international and national agencies responsible for gathering, reporting, and monitoring environmental information.

The centre would offer facilities for training and education, based on an ecosystem approach, to enterprise and industry, students at community colleges, and university undergraduate and graduate programs Canada-wide, for people planning careers in business or industry. In carrying out this part of its mandate, TEDCO should collaborate with community colleges in the Greater Toronto Area, including Ryerson, George Brown, and Humber, and with universities throughout southern Ontario, including Trent, Toronto, York, Windsor, Waterloo, and Guelph, all of which provide such education. In doing so, the centre would offer opportunities for direct contact among students, experts in research and development, managers, and workers in green enterprise and industry so essential to Toronto's future.

In addition to its negotiations with the THC, TEDCO has begun to define the role and mandate of the proposed Centre for Green Enterprise and Industry, including

the development of a business plan. It is in this context that Commissioner Crombie has agreed to bring together representatives of the THC, the City of Toronto, and the Department of Transport to define the amount of land to be transferred from the THC to TEDCO, as well as related matters.

## **INTEGRATED REVIEW AND APPROVAL SYSTEM**

As discussed in Part I of this report, regeneration of the Greater Toronto waterfront is hampered by the complexity of jurisdictions, planning, regulations, and approvals; this is certainly true of the Lower Don Lands. The environmental audit of the East Bayfront/Port Industrial Area included an analysis of the existing frameworks for stewardship and accountability, and found that regulatory and decision-making processes limit possibilities for adopting an ecosystem approach to planning and managing the area.

Similarly, planning for Ataratiri involves a lengthy and complex process. The City's Part II Official Plan Proposals (1991) describe a multi-year, four-stage approval process for development, to include:

- approval of the policy statements contained in the proposals document, together with a zoning by-law, development plan, and plan of subdivision for the entire Ataratiri site;
- approval of sub-areas consisting of several development blocks, provided that detailed environmental, flooding, and community service issues have been addressed;
- approval of each development block depending on completion of necessary pre-construction environmental clean-up;

- approval of individual development applications, provided that the building design satisfies concerns regarding noise, water conservation, energy conservation, waste reduction, reduction of automobile use, environmental remediation, and (where appropriate) floodproofing.

It is undoubtedly necessary to ensure that all public interests, including community services and environmental remediation, are thoroughly and carefully accommodated in redeveloping the Lower Don Lands. However it is also clear that ways must be found to structure the approvals process to provide the flexibility needed to respond to opportunities, integrate activities of different government agencies, and provide a greater degree of predictability and efficiency to encourage private-sector involvement. An integrated approach to the Lower Don Lands could help to free up some of the regulatory and jurisdictional problems currently hindering planning, approvals, and implementation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 72.** The Royal Commission recommends that an integrated approach be taken to planning in the Lower Don Lands, based on the framework outlined above, and that it involve participation by all levels of government, as well as the private sector and the public.
- 73.** The Royal Commission further recommends that the draft integrated plan provide a basis for public discussion involving federal, provincial, Metro, and City governments, the public, private-sector landowners, neighbouring residents, and other interested parties.
- 74.** An integrated process should be established to facilitate review and approval of remediation and development proposals by all levels and agencies of government.



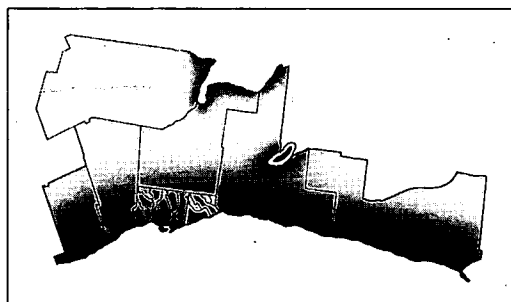
## CHAPTER 11: SCARBOROUGH

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In 1793 Elizabeth Simcoe, wife of the first lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, was impressed by the massive bluffs that lined the shoreline east of the colony's new capital: they reminded her of the scenic Yorkshire cliffs in Scarborough, England; the area was therefore given the name Scarborough. Designated a township in 1850, Scarborough became part of Metropolitan Toronto in 1953, and was officially declared a city in 1983.

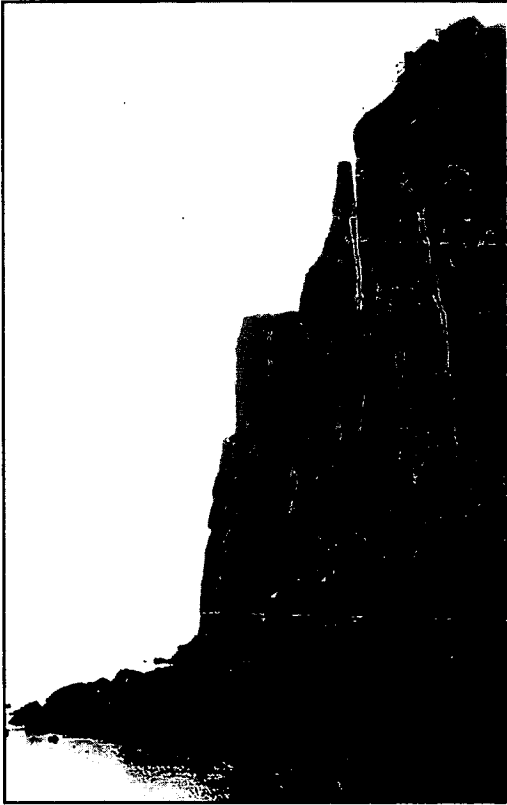
The Scarborough waterfront comprises 20 kilometres (12 miles) or 40 per cent of Metro's shoreline. The area contains the highest proportion of single detached dwellings and owned housing along the Metropolitan Toronto waterfront.

The extent to which the Scarborough waterfront is already urbanized (primarily in single-family homes) and the presence of the bluffs makes it more difficult — although not impossible — to connect people to the water and to establish safe public access compatible with waterfront trail objectives. In fact, implementing a greenway system can take the established urban residential communities into account, respecting the limited opportunities available to protect



the cultural heritage of the people and the natural heritage of the bluffs. In this regard, a two-tiered waterfront trail linking to a regional greenway would be beneficial in the City of Scarborough.

A visit to Bluffer's Park, one of the most popular regional recreational parks, where one can fish, boat, sit on the rocks or simply stroll in the park admiring the striking views of the bluffs year-round; a fall walk in the Rouge Valley where one can encounter animals and view rare birds, or smell winter coming and see the wonders of nature at work as the leaves change colour; the serene feeling that comes from being surrounded by the history and artifacts at the Guild Inn with the peaceful view of the shimmering lake and the sun setting from atop the bluffs — these are only a few



*At the foot of the bluffs, circa 1968*

of the memorable experiences possible in Scarborough, a short distance east of the commercial and economic activity in downtown Toronto. In many instances, access to these places is limited and could be greatly enhanced if there were a regional greenways system across the waterfront and up the river valleys. (See Chapter 5 on Greenways.)

Natural topography has always contributed to defining urban form along this portion of the shoreline. The Scarborough Bluffs, which stretch as high as 100 metres (330 feet) in some places and account for 75 per cent of Scarborough's waterfront, are a unique heritage site the City and MTRCA strive to protect. An educational learning centre along the Scarborough waterfront, specifically focused on the various environmental processes operating there, would be

a marvellous opportunity to educate the public about the bluffs.

Only two major waterways in Scarborough flow into Lake Ontario: Highland Creek and the Rouge River. The Highland Creek — lying entirely within the City — drains an area of over 105 square kilometres (40 square miles). The Rouge River watershed, which covers more than 300 square kilometres (116 square miles), encompasses portions of six local municipalities. Its lower reaches are predominantly in northeastern Scarborough, and the river eventually forms the southeastern portion of Scarborough's political boundary.

The Rouge's spring-fed headwaters rise in the Oak Ridges Moraine, and flow rapidly down the moraine's shoulders. Many small streams come together on flat agricultural plains in Markham to form slower-moving major tributaries. Before the two main branches of the river, the Rouge and Little Rouge, reach Scarborough they form large, well-defined valleys, tumbling over boulders and rocks. Natural erosion processes have exposed geological features that are provincially significant, as well as distinctive bluffs that are as high as 40 metres (131 feet). In the last few kilometres before the Rouge River enters Lake Ontario, it broadens into the Rouge Marsh — the largest provincially significant area in Metropolitan Toronto — housing exceptional wildlife populations.

A 1991 draft MNR Ecological Survey of the Rouge Valley Park notes (Varga, Jalava, and Riley 1991):

Collectively, the lower Rouge valleys, lakeshore marshes and adjacent tablelands are the most significant system of linked natural areas along any of the lower river valleys draining into the [sic]

northwestern Lake Ontario. The Rouge [in Scarborough] represents one of very few substantive corridors of natural space extending from the northwestern shores of Lake Ontario towards the interior of Halton, Peel, York, Durham or Metropolitan Toronto. The Rouge River and its valleys are exceptional among [other] watercourses from several points of view.

From one side of the valley to the other, the Rouge River corridor averages two kilometres (one mile) in width. The area contains a remarkable diversity of natural and rural heritage features and is especially important because of its proximity to Metropolitan Toronto — one of the last opportunities for ecological conservation on this scale in Metro.

Over the years, the Rouge River system in Scarborough has largely escaped urbanization and is a healthy and diverse ecosystem today. In the 1980s, proposals were presented to Scarborough Council to develop the Rouge tablelands in the city's northeast; after extensive study, Council decided to protect the area and designate it as

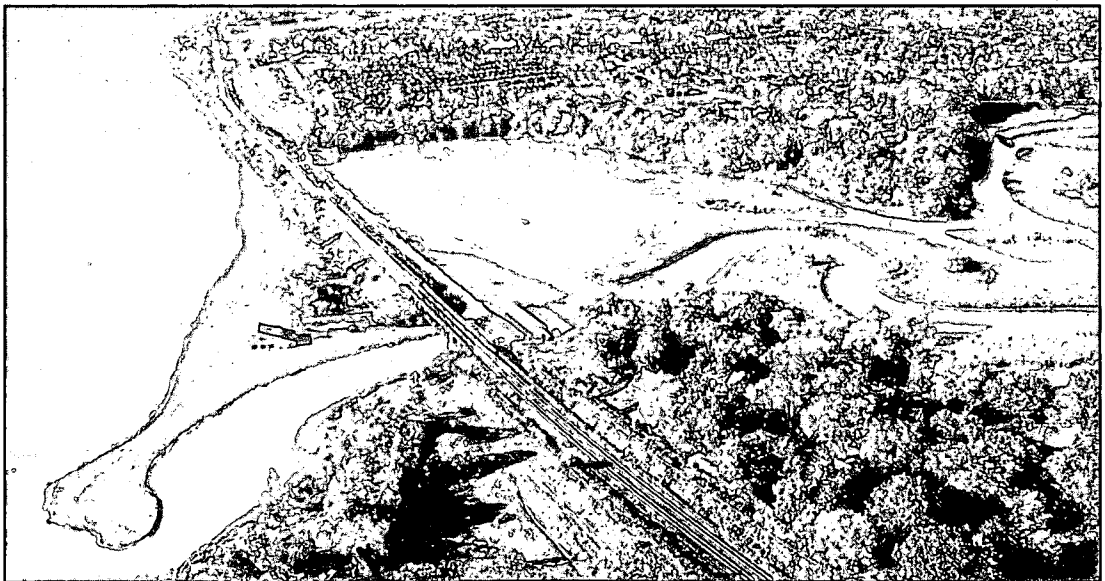
Regional Natural Environment for rural uses. However, in adjacent and upstream areas, development has led to the destruction of woodlots and wetlands, has replaced tall grasses and other natural habitat with manicured lawns, and has introduced erosion and water quality problems due to inappropriate stormwater management.

In its first interim report (1989), the Royal Commission supported the views of many interest groups, recommending

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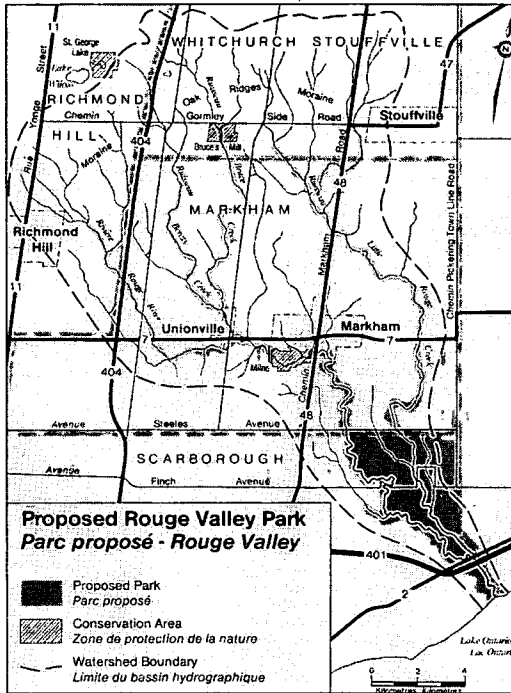
*The Rouge's spring-fed headwaters rise in the Oak Ridges Moraine, and flow rapidly down the moraine's shoulders. . . . The area contains a remarkable diversity of natural and rural heritage features . . . one of the last opportunities for ecological conservation on this scale in Metro.*

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*Looking west from the Rouge Marsh*

## Map 11.1 Proposed Rouge Valley Park



that the Rouge River Valley be protected as a natural heritage park. In March 1990, the provincial government announced its intention of creating a Rouge Valley Park and established an advisory committee on the subject. This professionally diverse group is responsible for drafting a park management plan for the portion of the park between Lake Ontario and Steeles Avenue (see Map 11.1.). The main goal is to ensure protection of the ecological integrity of the Rouge Valley Park and its natural, scenic, historic, and cultural values, through innovative planning, management, and use in the park and its environs (Rouge Valley Park Advisory Committee 1991).

By June 1992, the committee is to recommend a strategy and time-frame for protecting the park area and is likely to address extending its current northern boundaries to include publicly owned lands

in the Rouge and Petticoat Creek watersheds (provincial land assembly), and tablelands along the top of the valleys.

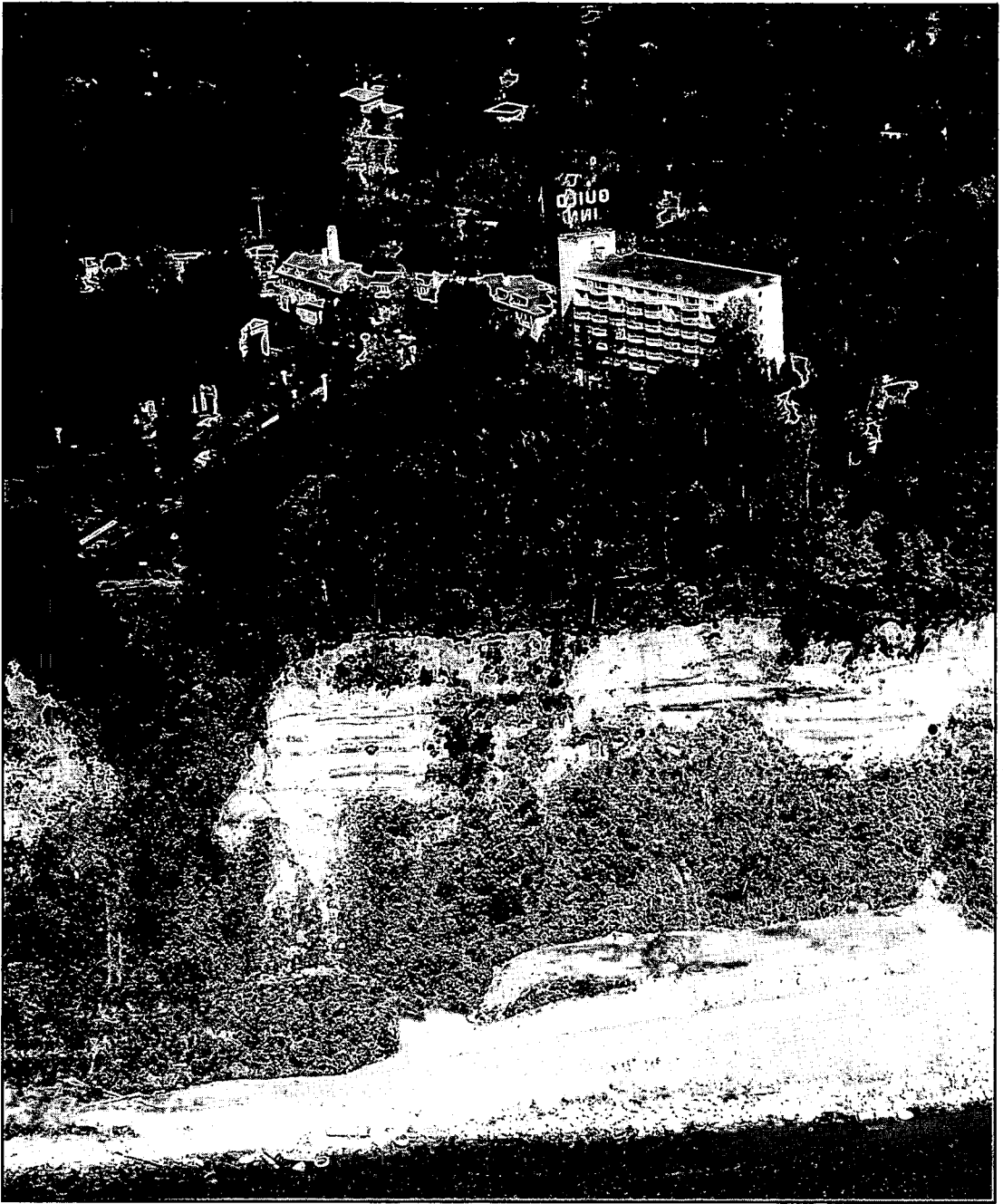
Consultants have been commissioned to work with the appropriate agencies to examine the area's ecological and cultural inventory and assist in drafting management strategies. While the goal of creating a park has been declared and park planning has begun, it is possible that the land under study, especially in York Region, could be environmentally degraded by development of surrounding parcels of land.

The City of Scarborough is currently examining its secondary planning policies to ensure that areas adjacent to the park are adequately protected. The Advisory Committee has asked that these areas be protected in the interim, before degradation precludes future park options.

The health of the Rouge watershed and the long-term ecological integrity of the park depend on the extent and environmental sensitivity of development in the rest of the watershed. Proper controls such as stormwater management and protection of valley corridors, including adjacent tablelands, are essential. As part of its mandate, the Rouge Park Advisory Committee reviews development applications that will affect the park.

Obviously, development adjacent to the Rouge Valley should protect ecological processes and maintain the natural beauty of the valley. The natural profile of the skyline has been marred, in many urban valleys, by high-rises. Scarborough has begun to address this issue. Other municipalities with similar valley resources should ensure that appropriate height controls and development siting maintain and enhance views.





*The Guild Inn and the Scarborough Bluffs*

The Commission supports the initial work undertaken on the Rouge Valley Park, and urges creation of a comprehensive strategy to ensure that, many years from now when the park is completed, it is ecologically healthy. Implementation of the strategy,

which takes public input into account, should begin as soon as possible, even while planning proceeds for the northern half of the park.

As part of this process, thought should be given to a greenway protecting the

## SCARBOROUGH'S GUILD OF ALL ARTS

The unpretentious gates on the Guildwood Parkway, along the waterfront in suburban Scarborough, are deceiving. The narrow driveway opens up and foliage gives way to reveal a picturesque inn surrounded by what seem to be Grecian artifacts and ruins.

The pieces of Grecian architecture, marble sculptures, and reliefs dispersed on the grounds of the Guild Inn look mysterious, arresting — and completely out of place. In fact, they are out of place: they were saved by Spencer Clark when the rest of the buildings of which they were a part were destroyed in the 1960s and '70s. They are all that remains of many of the finest examples of classical 19th-century architecture that were torn down to make way for designs from such contemporary architectural schools as Bauhaus.

One finds echoes of civilization's architectural past in four imposing columns on the north grounds of the Guild Inn. These Ionic columns and capitals, from a period prevalent in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., once graced the Bankers Bond building, on a site now occupied by First Canadian Place, the tallest building in Canada, designed by Edward Durrell Stone.

Corinthian columns and capitals replaced Ionic in the fourth and third centuries B.C. Examples of the Corinthian style can be found in the salvaged marble columns at the Guild; they were once part of the Bank of Toronto, which stood on the site now occupied by Mies van der Rohe's Toronto-Dominion Centre and are among the 21 capitals and columns that form an amphitheatre, designed by the late Ron Thom, on the south grounds of the Guild Inn.

Although the practice of stone masonry has declined, the Guild — where many of the capitals, pediments, and bas-relief carvings are at ground level, albeit out of context — offers the opportunity to fully examine and appreciate the craftsmanship of the salvaged pieces.

There are more than 50 demolished buildings represented at the Guild, a monument to Spencer Clark and his vision of preserving at least some of Toronto's architectural past. The collection should be cherished and enhanced in every way possible.

Sources: Cowan, H. November 1984. "The ruins of winter." *City and Country*, The Spencer Clark Collection of Historic Architecture.

waterways and valleylands that feed into the Rouge River. This would help establish connections to significant natural areas such as the Oak Ridges Moraine and Duffin's Creek, conservation areas, and existing local and regional parks.

The Guild Inn, atop the bluffs on Scarborough's waterfront west of the Rouge

River, houses a unique collection of architectural pieces. Established in 1932 by Rosa and Spencer Clark, the site was the original home for The Guild of All Arts, a thriving artists' colony. As Toronto's business buildings were being demolished over the years, Spencer Clark collected historic landmarks and kept them on the inn's

grounds. He eventually sold the land and its buildings to the Province and Metro in 1978; Metro established the Board of Management of the Guild in 1983, to manage the property on its behalf. With the change in ownership came a change in direction in the vision of the site's future: recent proposals are that the inn be redeveloped as a substantially larger hotel/convention centre. However, formal plans have yet to be submitted to the City by Metro.

Scarborough's population has grown substantially — from 1,711 in 1900 to more than 267,000 in 1967 — and has risen by approximately 11 per cent since 1981; it is estimated to grow to more than 560,000 by 2001. The increase between 1990 and 2001 — more than 12 per cent — would be the greatest in any Metropolitan Toronto municipality, and greater than the increase in the region, estimated at eight per cent, for the same period.

In the early 1980s, population in the Scarborough waterfront grew moderately, at about one-third of that of the City; the number of children living in the area were evidence that it had the highest proportion of families in Scarborough.

Housing starts on the waterfront increased substantially in the late 1980s. In contrast to other municipalities in Metro, the Scarborough waterfront area has the lowest proportion of high-density residential housing. It is also the most exclusive waterfront in Metro, with the highest proportion of single detached dwellings — they comprise more than half the waterfront housing stock — and the highest proportion of ownership housing. Total employment in the Scarborough waterfront area rose by more than 50 per cent in the '80s.

## **WATERSHED UPDATE**

In the past year, the City of Scarborough continued to address waterfront planning — and, indeed, city-wide planning issues — with an ecosystem approach, which has been well received at the political, bureaucratic, and community levels.

In October 1990, the Scarborough Waterfront Committee recommended adoption of the ecosystem approach, the nine waterfront principles, and other Commission recommendations as interim waterfront policies for Scarborough. Over the following nine months, public meetings were held and policies presented and discussed. In July 1991, City Council approved Official Plan Amendment 799, giving basic direction to activities along the city's 20 kilometres (12 miles) of waterfront and consistent with the Commission's views.

There is clearly no current agreement on the nature of regional co-ordination — a crucial step, in the Commission's view, in successful planning for the future. The City's view is that the leading role in local waterfront planning should remain in its hands, with regional co-ordination from Metro and continuing participation from MTRCA. It believes that Metro Toronto has not clearly defined its own role in waterfront planning, in the recently released *Planning Directions for the Metropolitan Waterfront: An Overview* (1991), which was intended to be the basis for discussion between Metro and other local municipalities on establishing a regional waterfront plan. Scarborough plans to continue to develop its waterfront on the basis of connectedness and safe public access, and is working with Metro, MTRCA, and others as necessary.

In its *Watershed* report, the Commission recommended that the environmental

conditions of industrial areas such as the Johns-Manville site be investigated before being considered for redevelopment. The major issue currently facing the City is whether to retain industrial uses in the 60-hectare (150-acre) Centennial Industrial District adjacent to Lake Ontario. Lands north and east of the Centennial Industrial District are comprised of established residential communities, primarily of single-family homes.

As the Commission noted in *Watershed*, there is a potential "to establish a new residential area, the Port Union Community", on the Scarborough waterfront. Since then, the City has continued to deal with applications from developers and landowners seeking to redesignate and rezone industrial lands for alternate (primarily high-density residential) uses. In December 1990, Scarborough Council approved a Study of Options and Opportunities for the Development of the Centennial Industrial District.

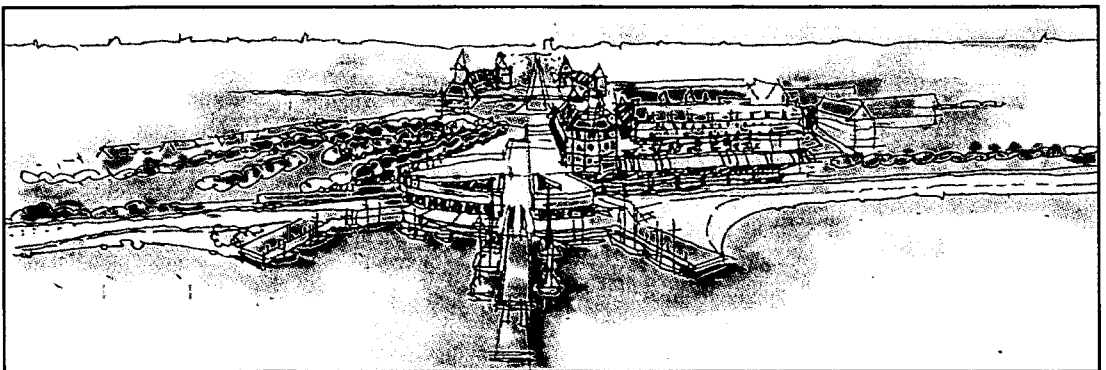
## PLANNING INITIATIVES

The purpose of the study, undertaken by City staff, is to assess the feasibility and desirability of retaining current industrial uses and to outline the next steps to be

taken, based on desired land uses and capitalizing on waterfront opportunities. Terms of reference note that consideration should be given to appropriate land uses on the waterfront and that the Commission's nine principles should be implemented. The report is to be available early in 1992.

This is the City's most significant opportunity to enhance residential use and create a new waterfront community. The area, including the Rouge Hill GO station, has the most potential to bring people to the waterfront. Scarborough's decision about desired land uses should ensure that future development of the Centennial Industrial District is compatible with the waterfront. The historically significant old Port Union Village should also be restored and preserved in future plans for the area. The CNR line running along the shoreline now forms a barrier to Lake Ontario, and consideration should be given to ways of increasing public access.

Urban designers at a recent charette have suggested that the Centennial Industrial District also has potential as a gateway to the city for visitors arriving by water. A ceremonial entrance to the city would reflect the grandeur of the bluffs; it could connect to Scarborough City Hall via a tree-lined parade



*Proposed ceremonial waterfront entrance at the foot of Port Union Road*

route. Port Union Road could become the major organizing element of the community, anchored by nodes at both ends. A public facility at the water could include a gateway to the City and the beginning of a "ceremonial drive" from the waterfront to Scarborough City Hall; the north end could house a strong commercial node or other feature that delineated the entrance to a new Port Union community.

The Commission also made recommendations on redeveloping the publicly owned Guild Inn site. *Watershed* noted that local interests should be fully considered by the City of Scarborough in evaluating redevelopment proposals, and that such evaluations should be based on waterfront policies and should conform to the nine waterfront principles. An initial proposal by the lessee, including high-density development, met public resistance primarily from residents of the Guildwood community. Because Metro, the Guild Inn's owner, did not approve of the proposal, it was not submitted to the City. No revised proposal has yet been submitted.

Plans to redevelop the Guild Inn should not have an adverse impact on the surrounding community, which has existed since the 1950s. This is particularly true with respect to traffic and access to the waterfront, which should retain its existing natural, cultural, and small-scale characteristics.

If the Centennial Industrial District and the Guild Inn lands become engulfed by inappropriate, added elements of built form, chances for added public access and views to the water will disappear in key places along the shore. The City should ensure that approved built forms are sensitive to the water's edge, enhance views and vistas, and encourage people to visit the

waterfront. Appropriate public amenities should also be provided and linear access connecting one part of the waterfront with the others should be a priority in preparing and reviewing all proposals.

The concerns that *Watershed* expressed about the focus of the Draft East Point Park Master Plan/Environmental Assessment and the environmental effects of lakefill, road access, traffic, and safety are being addressed. Following the release of *Watershed*, and while the Commission's review of shoreline regeneration was under way, MTRCA exercised more caution in proceeding with lakefill projects. In 1991, the Authority began to study the effects of proposed lakefill for East Point Park on water circulation, water quality, and adjacent intake/outfall pipes. This is scheduled to be completed by mid-1992.

As a potential major project requiring lakefill, East Point Park should be evaluated in the context of the Shoreline Regeneration Plan recommended in Chapter 4.

Added public concern has risen about including a Metropolitan Toronto sports

**The danger, as we are now beginning to see, is that whenever we make changes in our surroundings, we can all too easily shortchange ourselves, by cutting ourselves off from some of the sights or sounds, the shapes or textures, or other information from a place that have helped mold our understanding and are now necessary for us to thrive.**

Hiss, T. 1990. *The experience of place*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

facility complex in East Point Park. The proposed site would possibly destroy habitat for rare plants, such as the white bottle gentian, as well as for migrating birds, and other animals. Legally, the sports facility plan is an individual proposal, separate from the Conservation Authority's plan for the remainder of the park. In mid-1990, the provincial Ministry of the Environment granted Metro exemption of the sports facility from an individual environmental assessment, on the grounds that it met the criteria for municipal recreation projects with an estimated cost of less than \$3.5 million. However, it should be noted that this decision did not include consideration of alternative locations or the likely effects of the facility.

The Ministry of the Environment has been asked to review the situation, and is currently considering whether the proposed sports facility should be subject to an individual environmental assessment, rolled into one that already exists for East Point Park, or if it should remain completely exempt. The Commission hopes the Ministry review will result in a process that recognizes existing studies and addresses the need for a comprehensive evaluation of the plans for the entire park, with a view to maintaining and enhancing the environmental integrity of the area.

For the past 32 years, planning in the City of Scarborough has been based on the 1959 Official Plan, which now has more than 800 amendments. The Commission believes that the plan should be revised, giving added emphasis to protecting and enhancing the natural environment, while addressing economic and community needs. Thought should also be given to protecting and enhancing Scarborough's waterfront and its

heritage; in this regard, a local waterfront plan is recommended for the City of Scarborough.

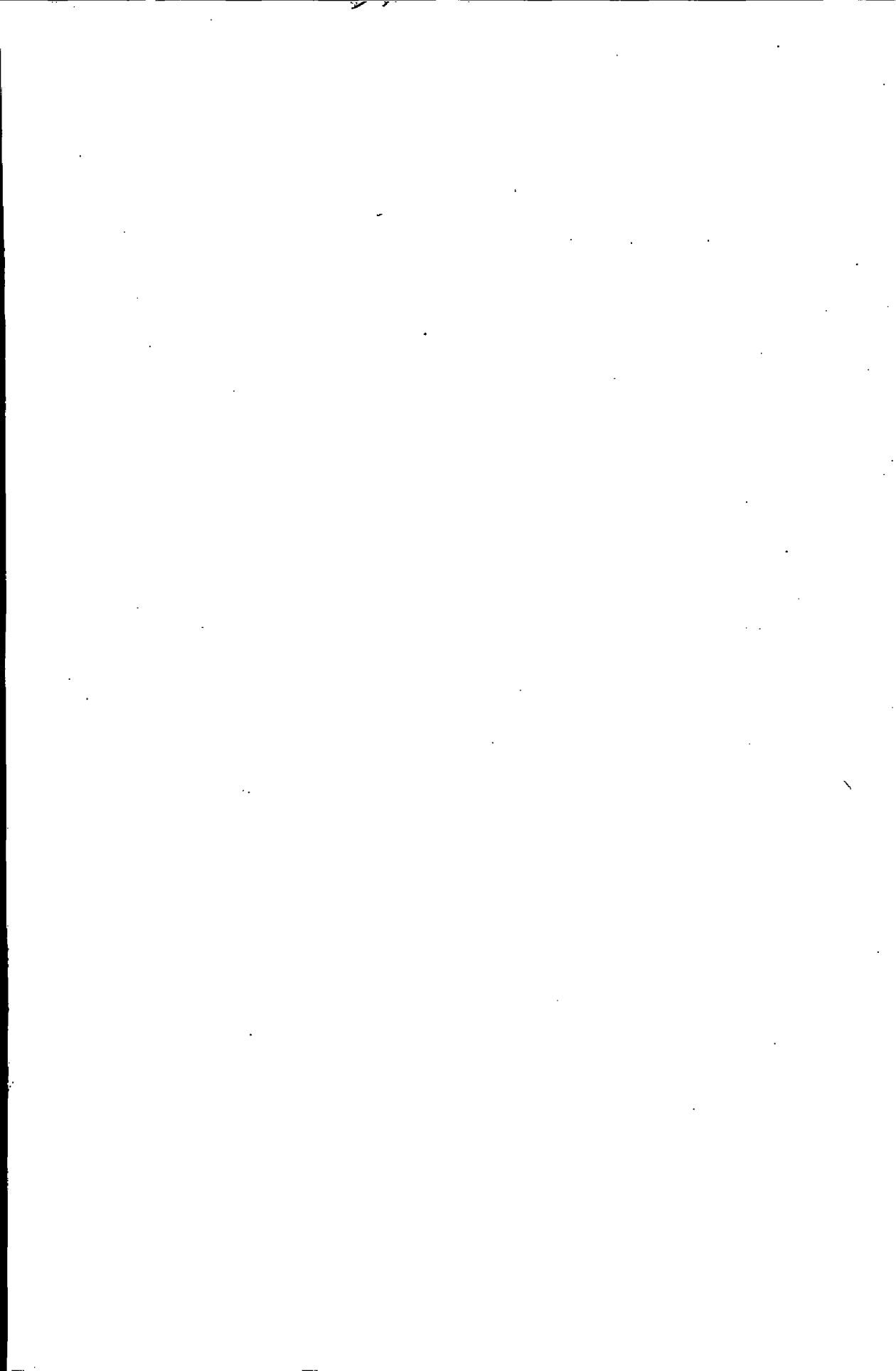
## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 75.** The Royal Commission recommends that the City of Scarborough, the Regional Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority review relevant documents including official plans and other waterfront-specific plans to ensure that they incorporate the ecosystem approach and nine waterfront principles described in Part I.
- 76.** The Commission further recommends that the City of Scarborough, Metropolitan Toronto and MTRCA participate in preparing the proposed shoreline regeneration plan, including the waterfront greenway and trail and ensure that any other plans for waterfront areas are reviewed and/or developed in this context.
- 77.** The Province of Ontario, the Regional Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, and the City of Scarborough should negotiate a Waterfront Partnership Agreement in conjunction with appropriate authorities and agencies. It should:
  - clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of various agencies and authorities in developing and implementing plans for the Scarborough waterfront;
  - offer comprehensive waterfront and river valley policies, taking

into account the environmental vulnerability of the Scarborough Bluffs and the Rouge River Valley area. Such policies should outline ways to acquire, maintain, and provide access to land along the waterfront and up the river valleys. They could take the form of a waterfront plan and should be incorporated into the City's official and secondary plans;

- encourage continued development of a waterfront trail, including a two-tiered trail in Scarborough as part of the regional greenway and trail system, one route above the bluffs and one at their base. The system should also enhance access nodes to the waterfront, improve access to Bluffer's Park, and include facilities to educate the public on the geological processes that contributed to formation of the bluffs; and
- ensure that future land uses of the Centennial Industrial District are compatible with maintaining and enhancing the environmental integrity and public use of the waterfront. The opportunity to develop a new community that is integrated with the waterfront should be evaluated, and priority given to waterfront urban design guidelines. Consideration should also be given to ways in which the CNR line, which is a significant element in this area, can be better integrated to form a less obtrusive barrier to the waterfront.

78. The Province of Ontario, Metropolitan Toronto, and the City of Scarborough should ensure that any redevelopment of the Guild Inn respects and enhances its natural, historic, cultural and small-scale characteristics and maintains public access to the site.







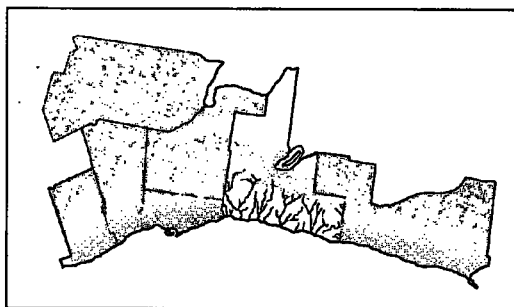
## CHAPTER 12: DURHAM

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Durham Region lies east of York Region and Metro Toronto, partially surrounded by the shorelines of three lakes — Simcoe and Scugog, which are north of the Oak Ridges Moraine, and approximately 62 kilometres (39 miles) of Lake Ontario shoreline to the south.

The Regional Municipality of Durham came into being in 1974, a year after the Province of Ontario introduced the concept of regional government. Seven of the region's eight local municipalities are adjacent to water; of these, five — Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa, and Newcastle — are adjacent to Lake Ontario. Durham encompasses about 40 per cent of the Greater Toronto bioregion's Lake Ontario shoreline, but is the most undeveloped region across the area, currently housing only about 20 per cent (about 70,000 people in 1986) of the total waterfront population.

The region is inside the boundaries of four conservation authorities: the Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority, the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, and the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority.



In this portion of the Greater Toronto bioregion, waters that flow into Lake Ontario include the Rouge River, Petticoat Creek, and Frenchman's Bay in Pickering; Duffin Creek and Carruther's Creek in Ajax; Lynde Creek in Whitby; Oshawa, Harmony/Farewell, and Black creeks in Oshawa; Bowmanville, Soper, Wilmot, and Graham creeks in Newcastle; and the Ganaraska River in Newcastle and Port Hope. There are Master Drainage Plans only for the Petticoat Creek and Carruther's Creek watersheds and a *Comprehensive Basin Management Strategy* (1990) for the Rouge River area.

The Durham shoreline comprises a variety of elements, including peaceful and relaxing natural areas, active urban parks and open spaces, new and old residential

neighbourhoods and communities, marinas, large and small public utility buildings, and a significant industrial component.

The region's nature lovers and bird-watchers are among the many people who enjoy visiting such natural habitat areas as Frenchman's Bay and its surrounding marshes; the Petticoat Creek Conservation Area in Pickering; Carruther's Creek and its marshes in Ajax; and the Lynde Shores Conservation Area in Whitby. Lakeview Park in Oshawa, which has its recreational facilities and historical buildings, is well-used by families. In Newcastle, Darlington Provincial Park caters to passive and active park users with many natural open spaces. Wilmot Creek to the east is well-known for its superb salmon fishing.

The Town of Pickering offers examples of both old and new, ranging from modern residential subdivisions to country estates, and including hamlets and villages with rural charm, rich farmland areas, and vast expanses of parkland and natural open space. Existing public facilities, such as the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station and the Duffin Creek Water Pollution Control Plant, are necessary structures on the waterfront and have become virtual built-form landmarks on Pickering's shoreline, visible from enormous distances along Lake Ontario.

Ajax has as much rural charm as Pickering, but is becoming increasingly urbanized. Future development should protect and enhance its natural and cultural heritage; current open spaces on the waterfront

could be made more diverse, to provide a variety of experiences along the shore.

Approximately 70 per cent of Whitby's waterfront is publicly owned. Residents and nature lovers can enjoy watching wildlife in the rich vegetation and marshes of the Lynde Shores Conservation Area. To the east, the current Whitby Psychiatric Hospital lands are informally accessible to the public, and are currently being evaluated for institutional and residential redevelopment. The provincially owned site offers spectacular views of the Lake Ontario shoreline to the east and west; future changes to built form should maintain and enhance these views.

Plans call for future residential and recreational uses, including parkland and open space, on the dilapidated Whitby Harbour and surrounding lands east of the hospital site. The remainder of Whitby's

waterfront is industrial, but the Town hopes that eventually it can ensure public access across the entire waterfront.

Almost 80 per cent of Oshawa's waterfront is owned by public agencies, about half of it —

including the harbour area and the environmentally sensitive Second Marsh — by the Oshawa Harbour Commission; most of the remainder is public parkland or conservation authority land.

Lakefront Park West and Lakeview Park are the city's two major waterfront parks and future plans for the former include a water theme park and a marina. Natural amenities and the numerous children's recreational facilities are often used by nearby families.

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Lakeview Park has a more natural environmental focus and historical background: the area is linked to extensive valleylands to the north and could be linked to the Oshawa Harbour area to the east. The property was formerly farmland, most of which was owned by the Henry family and by other early pioneers and their descendants; it was acquired and donated to the City by General Motors of Canada for use as a public park. The old buildings and their contents tell the story of Oshawa's history: the Henry House Museum, one of the oldest houses in Oshawa, was the home of Thomas Henry, a famous pioneering citizen, in the mid-1800s. Robinson House, built in the 1840s, is historic and has an unusual architectural design: originally a seaman's tavern that served sailors docking at the Port of Oshawa, in 1965 it was restored and established as an addition to the Henry House Museum. The Oshawa Historical Society plays a major role in ensuring that these buildings are preserved and restored.

The Newcastle shoreline is marked by Ontario Hydro's Darlington Generating Station and the St. Marys Cement facility. The vast remainder of the waterfront is currently given over to rural and natural areas, except at the Port Darlington Marina and the Wilmot Creek Retirement Community. In addition to fishing in Wilmot Creek, some residents use the vacant agricultural and waterfront lands for recreational purposes to discharge firearms. This is a concern for nearby residents.

Durham Region's population increased slightly in the early 1980s and is expected to grow by approximately 65 per cent from 1986 to 2001; it is currently estimated at 370,000. This forecast — based on factors including the growth rate of the regional

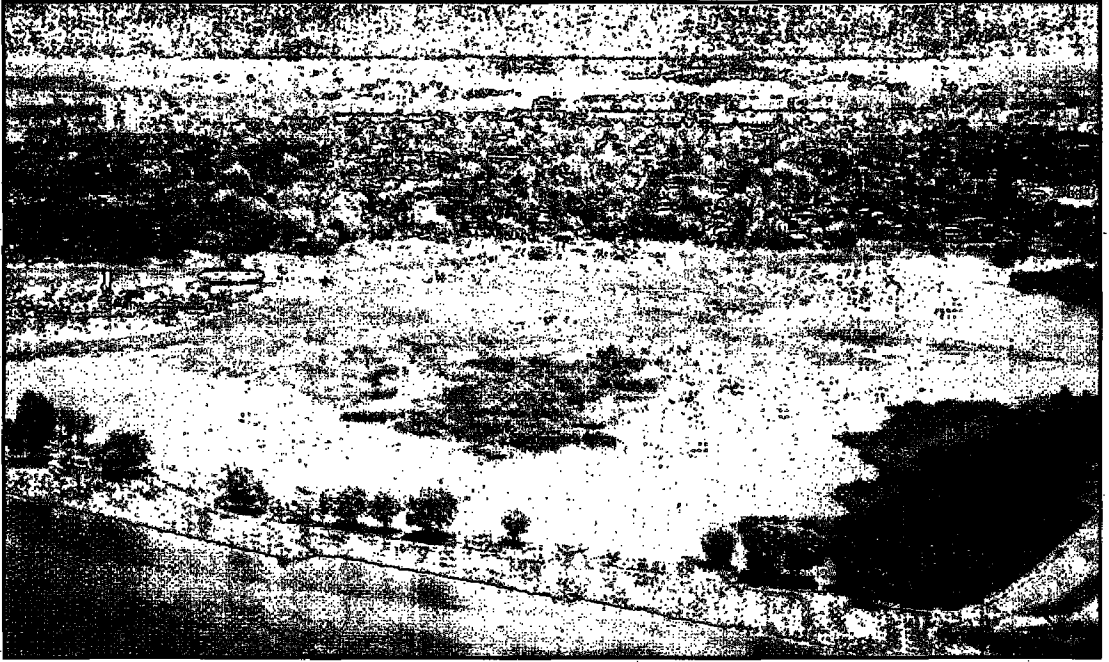
economy and the distribution of regional population — is the highest predicted for any of the four Greater Toronto waterfront regions.

Urbanization in Durham is centred in three major nodes: Pickering/Ajax, Whitby/Oshawa/Courtice, and Bowmanville/Newcastle: The Bowmanville/Newcastle area will continue to grow the most. A large number of residents in Durham commute to Metropolitan Toronto by car or GO Transit. Any future eastward expansion of GO Transit would reduce the current proportion of automobile commuters.

Most of Pickering's waterfront area — extending south of Highway 401 to Lake Ontario from the Rouge River in the west to Duffin Creek in the east — is residential, mostly low-density, single-family homes. The town has the highest average household income on the Durham waterfront. Thirty-five per cent of Pickering's residents live on the waterfront and approximately two-thirds of them work in Metro. East of the Frenchman's Bay area, the waterfront is given over to industrial uses including the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station.

Almost all of the Ajax waterfront is also residential, with more than 60 per cent (more than 23,000 residents) of the town's total population living in the waterfront area — an increase of more than 20 per cent in five years, with the potential for more residential waterfront development. Much of the Ajax shoreline consists of waterfront open space, large areas that have accumulated over time.

Whitby has the lowest waterfront population in the Durham waterfront area, in proportion to total residents: less than five per cent of the town's residents live there. This is probably because so much



*Duffin Creek at Lake Ontario*

land in Whitby's waterfront area has been designated for industrial and institutional uses. Similarly, only about 15 per cent of Oshawa's 125,000 residents live in the waterfront area.

Because much of Newcastle's shoreline is undeveloped, only 29 per cent of Newcastle's 34,000 residents currently live in the waterfront area.

Major waterfront industry is located primarily in Whitby, Oshawa and Newcastle. East of Cranberry Marsh and the Lynde Shores area, most of Whitby's waterfront is given over to industrial uses including the Lake Ontario Steel Corporation (LASCO). In the late 1980s, 78 per cent of Oshawa's employment on the waterfront was in processing and machining occupations. The city continues to be a strong industrial base in the region, but will be greatly affected if and when downsizing occurs at General Motors of Canada, Oshawa's largest employer.

The Oshawa Harbour area also houses active port users including McAsphalt, Chieftain Cement, LASCO, and Courtice Steel; occasional users include General Motors of Canada, General Electric, Honda Canada, and Molson Breweries.

The two major employers in Newcastle are Ontario Hydro's Darlington Nuclear Generating Station and the St. Marys Cement operation.

## **THE REGION**

The Region of Durham and its waterfront municipalities have a unique opportunity to preserve their natural shoreline, significant natural areas, and natural waterfront features, which are so abundant when compared to the remainder of the bioregion's waterfront. An ecosystem approach — considering the economy, the environment, and the community — and the Commission's principles have been endorsed by the Region and most of the

area municipalities, providing a good basis for future growth and development.

## **WATERSHED UPDATE**

In its *Watershed* (1990) report, the Commission urged the Province to negotiate one or more Waterfront Partnership Agreements with the Region of Durham, other levels of government, and other appropriate parties, in order to co-ordinate future activities along the waterfront. It also recommended that these agreements be closely linked to preparation of a Durham Waterfront Plan, which would include 17 environmental, economic, and community-oriented goals that should be reached as part of an ecosystem approach to planning. Since then, progress has been made in this regard.

Steps to establish strategies that will maintain and protect significant natural habitats have been taken in various parts of Durham Region:

- the Province of Ontario commissioned a study of the Frenchman's Bay area to evaluate the state of its environment; further study is proposed;
- Runnymede Corporation, landowners in the Carruther's Creek area, commissioned M. M. Dillon to prepare an Environmental Management Plan for the Carruther's Creek area;
- working on behalf of the surrounding landowners (including the Ontario Ministry of Government Services and the Region of Durham), Bird and

Hale environmental consultants (1991) completed an Environmental Management Plan for the Lynde Shores Major Open Space area in Whitby;

- a long-term management plan was completed for the Pumphouse Marsh in the City of Oshawa, with a view to preserving and protecting the existing ecosystem and enhancing the natural qualities of the marsh; and
- various studies have been undertaken on the Second Marsh; a steering com

mittee is considering how to implement short- and long-term plans for rehabilitating, protecting, and preserving it.

Among the remaining natural areas along the waterfront that should be

protected are McLaughlin Bay, the Wilmot Creek Mouth, and the Bond Head Bluffs in the Town of Newcastle.

## **REGIONAL PLANNING POLICIES**

In 1991 the Region of Durham approved its revised Official Plan, which is being reviewed by the Province of Ontario. The revised Durham Official Plan generally endorses the nine waterfront principles and encourages a healthy working relationship with the local municipalities to implement environmentally, economically, and socially sound planning principles. The document includes general policies directed towards implementing an ecosystem approach, used to define some broad objectives. Emphasis is placed on the need to assess the cumulative

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impact of various types of development within the region.

Development on the Durham waterfront has often been done piecemeal, under general direction of the local waterfront municipality. It was the Commission's view, articulated in *Watershed*, (and with which Durham concurred) that the Region coordinate local waterfront plans in a regional context. Although discussions have been undertaken, no significant steps towards a regional waterfront plan have been achieved within the last year.

Action is needed soon on the Region's proposal to prepare a waterfront plan to encompass all or part of Durham's Lake Ontario waterfront, from Pickering to Newcastle, in an amendment to the Regional Official Plan. The Commission supports this initiative, which is to address earlier *Watershed* recommendations, recreational opportunities, public access, wetland conservation, and other issues.

Development proposals have been submitted for extensive tracts of waterfront land in such areas as Ajax, Whitby, and Newcastle, while smaller-scale projects have been proposed for Pickering. The Oshawa Harbour Area is also the subject of discussion on revitalizing the port area and increasing public waterfront use while maintaining the environmental integrity of the land.

Durham needs to assume a leadership role by offering planning that is environmentally sound, and takes into account the cumulative effects of economic activities and community development on the natural and built environments.

Local municipalities also need to have the tools to implement such an approach to planning at their level; furthermore, co-operative action is needed locally,

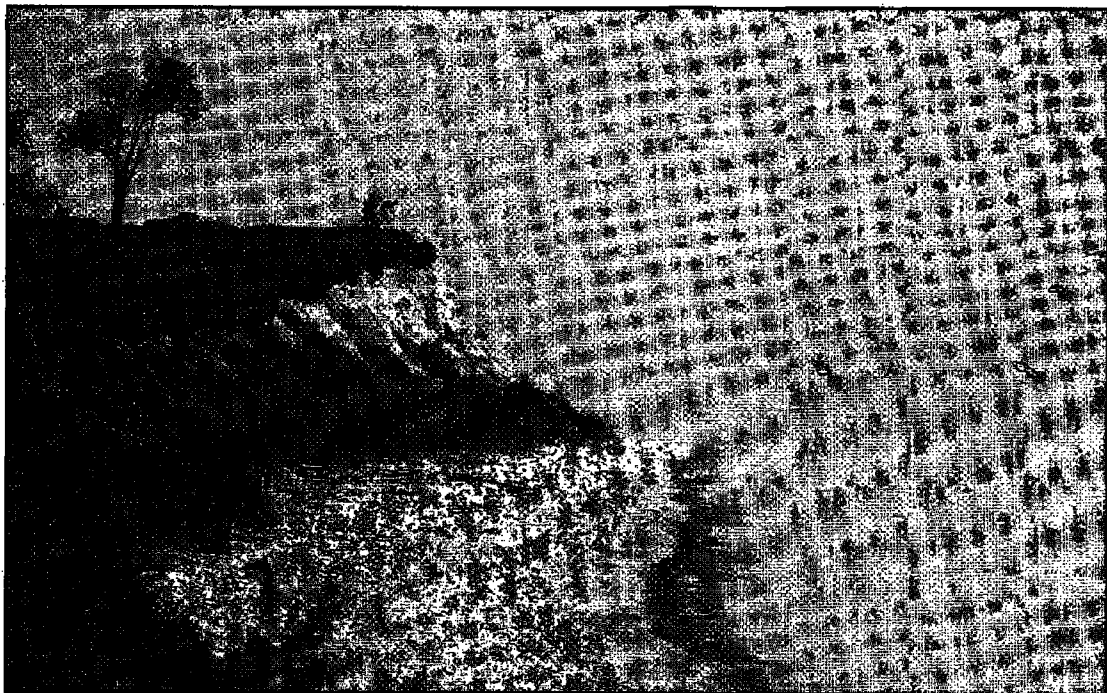
provincially, and federally, as well as amongst those levels, in concert with citizens and appropriate private-sector parties. This would ensure the necessary support and acceptance of environmental imperatives, the adoption of principles and the implementation of guidelines. For example, the region could work with local waterfront municipalities to implement a greenway strategy as a tool to protect ecological integrity and the natural areas which exist today. Inadequate alternatives include piecing together remaining parcels of land after each development has been approved or losing these areas to other uses such as golf courses.

Ontario Hydro has indicated its willingness to co-operate in ensuring safe access to the waterfront in areas near the Pickering and Darlington Nuclear Generating Stations in Durham and elsewhere on their waterfront lands.

As noted in Chapter 3, the Province has recognized the need to protect the moraine. An expression of Provincial Interest was made recently, interim guidelines for planning decisions were established, and a two-year study of long-term protective measures is scheduled to be completed in 1993.

The Durham Regional Plan recognizes the Oak Ridges Moraine as a major natural feature to be protected; a similar reference should be made to Durham's 62 kilometres (39 miles) of Lake Ontario shoreline, which is fairly developed in the west, but has expanses of relatively pristine waterfront land in the east, including bluffs that rise as high as 20 metres (66 feet).

In addition, significant natural areas, river valleys, and headwaters flowing south from the moraine should be protected as part of the Greater Toronto bioregion,



*Newcastle shoreline*

including the Altona Forest in Pickering and the Ganaraska River flowing through Newcastle and Port Hope into Lake Ontario.

## **TOWN OF PICKERING**

Pickering was established in the early 1800s and the first town meeting was held there in 1811. Population had escalated to approximately 8,000 by the mid-1800s, and was double that a century later. As recently as the 1950s, farming was still the major source of wealth within the township. With the development of Highway 401, developers began scouting the area for land with residential promise and found it on the waterfront. The most westerly waterfront municipality in Durham, Pickering is home to more than 50,000 people today.

Pickering has traditionally relied on the MTRCA to take the lead role in planning and land acquisition for its eight kilometres (five miles) of shoreline. The conservation

authority's ability to undertake these responsibilities successfully, as well as the historic debate over the ownership of Frenchman's Bay, has limited involvement in waterfront issues by the Town and its residents.

Debate about ownership of land under Frenchman's Bay and of part of the marshlands and the eastern shore, began in 1791 when the Township deeded parts of the bay to various people. By the mid-1800s, the deeds had been purchased by the Pickering Harbour and Road Joint Stock Company, which operated a busy commercial harbour in the bay until the 1920s.

The bay was purchased by the Pickering Harbour Company in 1965, but the argument has been made that, under the 1914 federal Beds of Navigable Waters Act, ownership of all such bodies of water reverted to the Crown in the absence of an express federal government grant or a legal determination; because neither of those

was made when the Pickering Harbour and Road Joint Stock Company owned the bay in 1914, the argument goes, the property reverted to the Crown at that time.

The status of the ownership of the bay and municipal control over land-use proposals is currently being considered by the courts; therefore, plans related to these lands and water bodies are dependent on resolving legal issues.

### **WATERSHED UPDATE**

In December 1990, Pickering Town Council responded positively to the Commission's report, and concurred with the ecosystem approach and the nine principles. It also agreed with other recommendations, such as the idea of a Waterfront Trail from Burlington to Newcastle, and an immediate review of the Ontario Trees Act.

The Province of Ontario, responding to an earlier *Watershed* recommendation for a study of Frenchman's Bay — and recognizing that there are concerns about balancing development and conservation in the area and that there is no integrated analysis of the problem — commissioned a report on the bay's capacity to support additional development.

The study, completed in June 1991 by the Heritage Resources Centre (Nelson et al.) at the University of Waterloo, concluded that many land-use and environmental changes have occurred in the bay area in the last 35 years, and that many more will occur in the future. It also noted that the land-use changes have had an adverse impact on the marshes and on other environmental qualities of the bay area.

It also concluded that added research, communication, and co-ordination among government agencies, citizen, and corporate

groups were needed to discuss visions, goals, and objectives for the bay as a whole; this should be done before any decisions were made on which development proposals for the area should be allowed to proceed. In support of these conclusions, the report recommended that "a moratorium be declared on developments in the Bay and its borderlands until a co-ordinated conservation and development (sustainable development) strategy is prepared".

In the past few years, development in the Frenchman's Bay area has been challenged: residents have grouped together to speak against development, and the Town has begun to recognize that there is a lack of comprehensive policies and direction on the cumulative effect of development on the shoreline and the natural environment.

Response to the June 1991 *Frenchman's Bay, Ontario: Conservation and Sustainable Development* report includes general support from key provincial agencies, the Town of Pickering, and the MTRCA. They have agreed to put together terms of reference for the recommended sustainable development strategy.

In the meantime, the conservation authority and the Town are exploring the feasibility of acquiring land owned by Sandbury Building Corporation in the north-east end of Frenchman's Bay. Sandbury's current development plans include 39 townhomes on the tableland portion of the site, with public access on floodplain lands between the development and the bay. The site is currently designated for low-density residential use and would require rezoning if the project were to go ahead. The land at the north end of the bay, currently owned by the Pickering Harbour Company, is also subject to possible residential development



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*Frenchman's Bay*

in the future on a site that includes environmentally significant marshes created by lake-filling many years ago.

Decisions regarding future land uses of the bay, including proposed development, should not be made until more is known about its environmental state.

## **LOCAL PLANNING INITIATIVES**

In the near future, the Town of Pickering is likely to begin a comprehensive review of its 1981 District Plan; this is an important opportunity for the Town to revise its plan and to take the ecosystem approach it supported in its earlier response to *Watershed*.

The review should focus on establishing relationships among environmental, economic, and community features that would result in a healthier, more balanced ecosystem and improved quality of life.

Significant natural areas should be protected and enhanced, including the waterfront, major waterways, and Frenchman's Bay, while development proposals should be assessed to evaluate possible environmental effects.

## **TOWN OF AJAX**

The present site of the Town of Ajax was once rolling farmland on the edge of Lake Ontario in Pickering Township. Used as an industrial site during the Second World War, the Town was later named after a British warship, HMS Ajax, symbol of courage and determination. Ajax became a post-war community; until 1950 it had no local government. It officially became a town in 1954, when the first Town Council and Public School Board were elected; in 1974, Ajax was amalgamated to include the former Town of Ajax, the Village of

Pickering, and portions of the Township of Pickering — which increased its size from less than 1214 hectares (3,000 acres) to more than 6475 hectares (16,000 acres). The combination of historic village homes, peaceful township farms, and a modern community make Ajax an interesting place in which to live, work, and play.

The town's population has grown from more than 23,000 residents in 1979 to more than 50,000 today, more than half of whom live in the waterfront area. Much of the six kilometres (four miles) of Ajax shoreline — from Duffin Creek east to Lakeridge Road — are given over to expanses of open space. This is the result of the Town's requirement of a 400-foot

(122 metre) setback in numerous low-density residential neighbourhoods along the waterfront. MTRCA has also played a major role in managing these waterfront open spaces.

When Ajax residents look south from their waterfront neighbourhoods, they can see vast areas of manicured lawn between themselves and Lake Ontario. This view is disturbed in only one place along the residential waterfront, east of Harwood Avenue at the site of the Regional Water Treatment Plant. Proposed expansion of the plant would result in further encroachment of open-space lands. This use of waterfront lands is recognized as necessary, but is not acceptable to all nearby residents.

## **WATERSHED UPDATE**

Last year, in addressing expansion of the Regional Water Treatment Plant, the Commission noted that “the proposed plant

will mean a loss of existing green space and will create a visual barrier to the waterfront.” It was recommended that “creative landscaping and building design should address these problems with a view to integrating the structure with the surrounding residential neighbourhood.” The Commission continues to support this view, citing the Metropolitan Toronto's R. C. Harris Water Filtration Plant, the largest facility of its kind, as a good example of an exquisitely designed public building. Rather than being

an eye-sore on the waterfront, the plant is considered by many people to be architecturally outstanding; its symmetry and terraced lawns are among its most engaging features.

But it is only in the past decade that architects have recognized the success of this structure and begun to give it the accolades it deserves.

The Region recognizes the need to preserve and enhance access and views to the lake in designing its Water Treatment Plant and landscaping the site.

Durham Region is currently awaiting the outcome of the Ministry of the Environment's review of the environmental study report on expanding the regional water supply plant on the Ajax waterfront. The Ministry has received requests to “bump-up” the categorization of this project from a Class environmental assessment to an individual environmental assessment; and has extended the review period indefinitely. Recent concerns about high tritium levels have led the Region to plan a further study of water quality in the near future.

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*The combination of historic village homes, peaceful township farms, and a modern community make Ajax an interesting place in which to live, work, and play.*

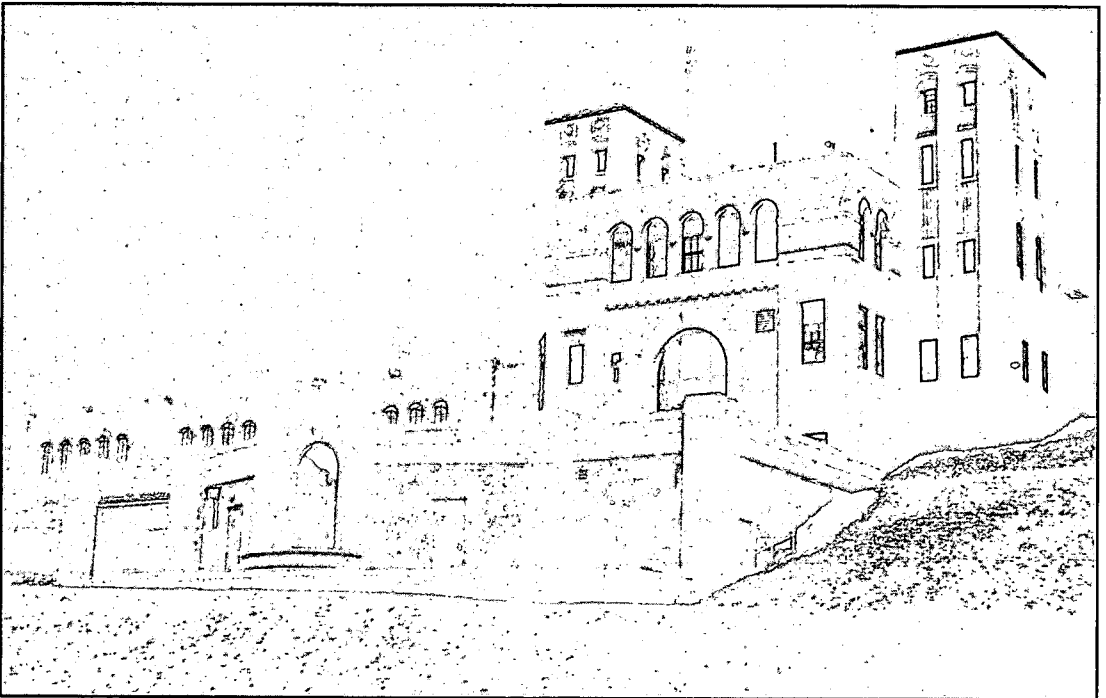
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Elsewhere along the Ajax waterfront, residential development is likely to continue. Most notably, two parcels of waterfront land are available for development: a significant portion of lands owned by Runnymede Development Corporation Limited, located at the east end of Ajax including Carruther's Creek Marsh, a Class III wetland; and a block of land at the foot of Harwood Avenue, currently owned by Hi-Rise Structures Limited.

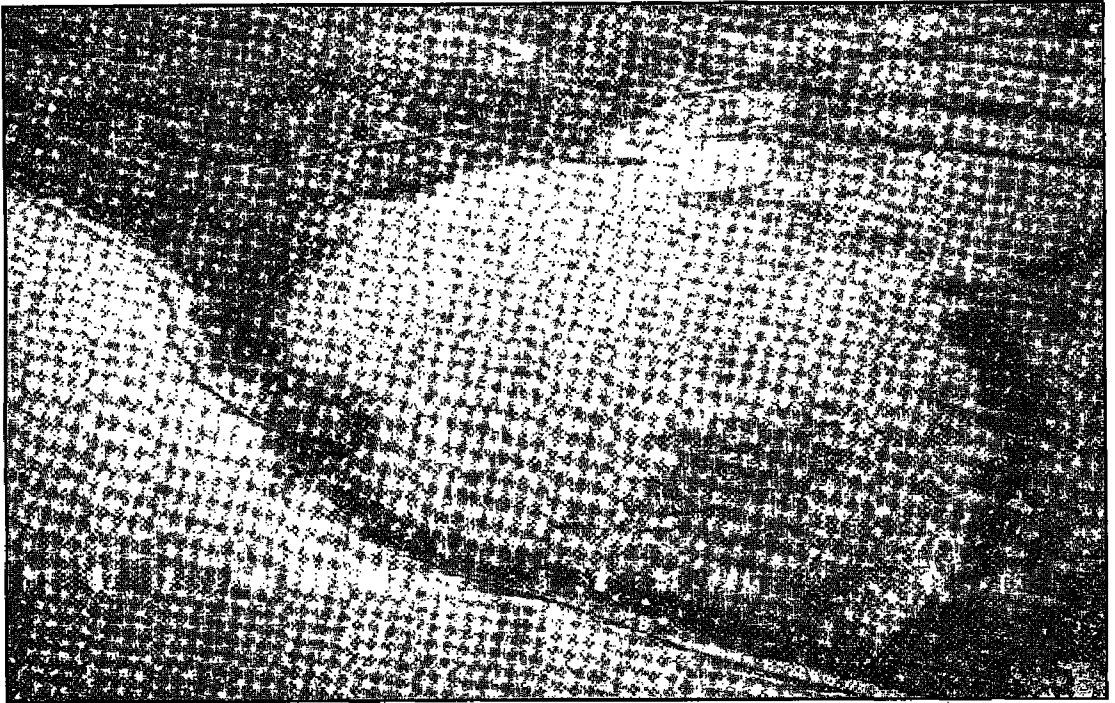
Initial development proposals released by Runnymede in June 1990 showed plans for a 95-hectare (234-acre) waterfront community, including a marina at the mouth of Carruther's Creek. Runnymede later voluntarily withdrew its development plans for the Carruther's Creek site, and are currently in the process of preparing new plans based on giving the environment priority. The Commission and the Town of Ajax agree that this is a commendable process, an example of how developers can adopt an

ecosystem approach to the planning process, focusing on the existing natural environment and on ways to protect and enhance important areas; moreover, this can be done while still maintaining preferred densities and developing an economically feasible project that is sensitive to more appropriate built forms and provides public access to the water's edge.

In considering the Runnymede property along the Ajax waterfront, the Commission recommended a strategy that would maintain and protect Carruther's Creek; the transfer of the Class III wetland at the mouth of the creek to be managed by a public agency; creation of a suitable, publicly owned buffer to protect wetland; and acquisition of waterfront lands east of the creek by the Town of Ajax or MTRCA as a requirement of future development. The Commission continues to support these recommendations.



*R.C. Harris Water Filtration Plant, Scarborough*



*Carruther's Creek, Ajax*

East of Carruther's Creek and the Regional Water Treatment Plant, is the 3.7-hectare (nine-acre) parcel of land owned by Hi-Rise Structures, adjacent to open space areas on the waterfront.

Hi-Rise's development plans call for approximately 440 residential apartments in four 10-storey buildings stepped back from the shoreline and, in addition, other commercial and recreational buildings. The Official Plan and zoning designations for this site permit high-density residential and commercial uses, providing a marina is developed. Hi-Rise has submitted a proposal in keeping with the residential high density, but has asked that the marina obligation be dropped. Establishing a marina in this location would require comprehensive environmental studies and a significant volume of either lakefilling or dredging.

The Commission is of the opinion that the current development plan is not designed

in an environmentally sensitive manner, and would like to see the proposal modified to incorporate an ecosystem approach similar to that of Runnymede Development Corporation. Plans should be consistent with the existing open and accessible character and scale of the Ajax waterfront.

The Town of Ajax should reconsider the appropriateness of designating the Hi-Rise lands as high-density residential and of the marina requirement, taking into account the issues discussed in this report, which would have to be addressed before the Province would approve a marina and other development on this site.

## **LOCAL PLANNING INITIATIVES**

Planning in the Town of Ajax is currently guided by the 1978 District Plan. The plan, while requiring a 400-foot (122-metre) setback in developments along the shoreline,

is not based on an environmental framework. Instead, general environmental policies are contained in the Durham Regional Official Plan and the policies of local conservation authorities.

Ajax has relied heavily on MTRCA for waterfront land acquisition and maintenance; as a result of the setback provision for development along the shoreline, vast expanses of open space are maintained by the conservation authority, primarily for passive recreational uses such as walking, jogging or bicycling along the shoreline. There is an opportunity to use these spaces to provide green connectors between natural environmental areas such as Duffin Creek and Carruther's Creek. However, such corridors would have to be heavily vegetated, preferably with native plant associations to create diverse wildlife habitat.

Ajax Council is still considering the *Watershed* report, but Town staff generally endorse the ecosystem approach and the nine principles. Because the Town would benefit from implementing such an approach, they should review the District Plan to incorporate the appropriate principles; the review should include a waterfront plan that is appropriate to the Town's needs, incorporating: environmental protection of the shoreline, natural areas, and rivers flowing into the lake; appropriate land uses on the waterfront; and greenway connectors within the Town and linking it to surrounding municipalities.

## **TOWN OF WHITBY**

In 1852 Whitby, which is adjacent to and east of Ajax, took its name from the seaside town in Yorkshire, England. Officially incorporated in 1855, it had a population of almost 3,000 people shortly thereafter; by

the 1950s, Whitby was home to more than 15,000 people and now has quadruple that number. By 2001, population is expected to approach 100,000.

Today, the town's eight kilometres (five miles) of Lake Ontario shoreline stretch roughly from Cranberry Marsh east to Corbett Creek; watercourses entering the lake at Whitby include Lynde Creek, Pringle Creek, and Corbett Creek. Among the most important natural areas along the waterfront are Cranberry Marsh and the Lynde Shores Conservation Area.

## **WATERSHED UPDATE**

Over the past year, Coscan's Harbour Isle residential development in the Town of Whitby has been hotly debated because of issues including access, massing, height, and density. In *Watershed*, the Commission recommended that continuous public access to the Whitby Harbour waterfront be incorporated into the project's plans. The following December 1990, the Province of Ontario endorsed the waterfront trail and the Commission's nine principles.

The Town of Whitby later approved plans for the Coscan project, which did not conform to the recently endorsed policy. The provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs indicated its intention of filing a zoning appeal with the Ontario Municipal Board, using the non-compliance as grounds.

The disagreements between the Town of Whitby and the Province of Ontario were eventually resolved to everyone's satisfaction. The then Mayor Bob Attersley noted that, "through a tremendous effort of all parties concerned, we met a mutual agreement. . . . I am proud that the municipality, the [Province] and the Developer were able to mutually agree on this project."

The revised Harbour Isle development proposal has been amended to include a public walkway around the entire site, a public parkette, an at-grade public walkway from Brock Street to the water's edge allowing public access through the project, and an overall reduction in the number of residential units from 791 to 734.

The Lynde Shores Secondary Plan area, located just west of Whitby Harbour, has also been under much study in the past year. In 1990, consultants were commissioned by landowners including the Region of Durham, the Province of Ontario (Ministry of Government Services) and the private sector to undertake an environmental management plan (EMP) for the area.

This comprehensive study identifies and documents environmentally sensitive and culturally significant areas, and assesses the potential impacts of development on the biophysical and cultural resources of within the Lynde Shores Secondary Plan area. It also makes recommendations for establishing and managing these areas as major open space lands. These lands are to be maintained or enhanced as development proceeds.

This Environmental Management Plan was prepared to fulfil Ministry of the Environment requirements to grant an environment assessment exemption to the Ministry of Government Services which, as a Crown ministry involved in planning and developing provincial lands, would normally undertake a full environmental assessment. The EMP is also a policy requirement of the draft secondary plan.

## **PLANNING INITIATIVES**

The Town of Whitby has undertaken a review of its 1974 Official Plan and recently completed the third phase of a five-phase

study, *Development of Strategies and Options* (M. M. Dillon et al. 1991). In the first and second phases background information was compiled and a policy review and assessment were begun; the last two phases will propose and finalize a Draft Official Plan and accompanying policies.

The Town's development strategy endorses the ecosystem approach, and will focus on a number of elements including, but not limited to:

- moving towards achieving sustainable development through the adoption of appropriate goals and policies;
- adopting the principle of land stewardship to protect land and water resources from the negative impact of inappropriate use or premature development;
- adopting "best management" practices to manage, enhance, and conserve Whitby's natural resources;
- establishing linked parks and open-space systems, primarily through the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Lake Iroquois shoreline, the Lake Ontario waterfront, and Heber Down Conservation Area, and a system of greenways comprising valleylands, parks, utility corridors, and open-space systems; and
- encouraging conservation and protection of water bodies, fisheries, wetlands, forest, and woodlots.

The Commission believes that the steps taken by the Town of Whitby in revising their Official Plan mark substantial progress and trusts that these will lead to comprehensive policies that strengthen continued economic growth and ensure maintenance of healthy urban and rural areas in the town.

## **CITY OF OSHAWA**

The City of Oshawa began as a clearing in the forest wilderness on the north shore of Lake Ontario, known from the early until the mid-19th century as Skae's Corners. In 1849, when it became a separate municipality known as Oshawa, the population was about 2,000.

Industrial progress began in 1876 when Robert McLaughlin, a carriage builder, moved to Oshawa to begin the McLaughlin Carriage Company; beginning with this small factory, business progressed and in 1918 the McLaughlin Carriage Company was sold and merged with the Chevrolet Motor Car Company of Canada, to form General Motors of Canada Limited. Today, the company has Canada's largest automobile plant, located on the Oshawa waterfront.

General Motors of Canada today is a waterfront-friendly industry, helping to protect the Oshawa Second Marsh located adjacent to its corporate headquarters and establishing the McLaughlin Bay Wildlife Reserve. Native vegetation is being planted and trails are being created; the area will soon be open to the public. The active protection of the marsh evolved over the past few decades, gaining support from governments and the private sector. In June 1991, General Motors received the Pickering Naturalists' Conservation Award for continued efforts to design headquarters that would be compatible with protecting the marsh — building height, glazing, and lighting were designed keeping in mind migrating birds; moreover, the headquarters development protects the Second Marsh with a berm/swale complex and silt ponds to control run-off.

The Oshawa waterfront area comprises almost eight kilometres (five miles) of Lake

Ontario shoreline, stretching from Corbett Creek to McLaughlin Bay. Major local areas of environmental importance and waterways flowing into Lake Ontario include the Oshawa Second Marsh, Pumphouse Marsh, and Oshawa Creek. The Oshawa Harbour Area is also a major component of the city's waterfront.

Oshawa Harbour Commission lands currently include the Oshawa Harbour area and the Second Marsh; many people feel that the harbour area includes industrial uses that are unwanted next to a recreational area, Lakeview Park, that is likely to be used increasingly in the future. Most cargo traffic is located on the east side of the harbour, next to the environmentally sensitive Second Marsh. The future role of the harbour area is currently being studied by the City.

Over the past decade, the port has undergone major changes in cargo mix and users: in the early 1980s, St. Marys Cement relocated its high-volume coal shipments from the Oshawa port to its own private facility in Newcastle. Since that time, its salt storage, regional distribution, and other uses have also moved to the St. Marys Cement dock.

## **WATERSHED UPDATE**

The Commission recommended a review of the 1984 Oshawa Harbour Development Plan to better define the role of the port in light of potential alternate land uses. The Commission further recommended that, if it were decided that the industrial/commercial port function was no longer warranted, the Oshawa Harbour Commission should be disbanded and its lands transferred to the City of Oshawa for development based on an approved plan that conforms to the nine principles.





*General Motors headquarters building near the Oshawa Second Marsh*

Since those recommendations were made, the City of Oshawa has begun a comprehensive planning study of the Southeast Oshawa area, including the Oshawa Harbour, the Second Marsh, and surrounding lands. The review is geographically divided into two areas: the Oshawa Harbour area lands and the balance of the land north and east of the harbour, including the Second Marsh.

The harbour study for the port area, undertaken by Malone Given Parsons for the City of Oshawa, examined the role and economic viability of the existing port, to determine preferred future land uses for the southeast Oshawa Harbour area. They applied the ecosystem approach outlined in *Watershed*, and considered port issues in the context of the environmental condition of the lands, the port's economic future, its local and regional roles, and issues that would affect the community, including public access and use of the waterfront. The study's key conclusions are that:

- a mix of cultural and recreational uses would be the most appropriate long-range plan for the port;
- a mix of industrial and non-industrial uses is a viable shorter-term strategy for servicing port industrial functions in the near future, recognizing that sustainable development requires a balance of economic and environmental changes;
- implementing the broader objectives for long-term use of the port lands (which is still anticipated) would mean moving current Oshawa port functions to an alternative harbour;
- the Port of Oshawa can continue to operate in an economically viable and self-sustaining way until a clear alternative exists;
- a Waterfront Partnership Agreement, consistent with the Commission's *Watershed* recommendations, would be the most appropriate way to ensure that the government and private landowners co-operate in implementing this (or an alternative) plan; and
- the 1984 Oshawa Harbour Development Plan and related studies were over-ambitious and cannot be

supported by current or projected market demand.

The balance of the Southeast Oshawa lands were examined in a study by City of Oshawa staff. Existing land uses are primarily open space and industrial; the area includes the environmentally sensitive Second Marsh and other significant natural open-space areas. The main issues for the Southeast Oshawa study area are the need for long-term planning, soil contamination and other environmental constraints, and preservation and enhancement of natural areas, particularly the Second Marsh.

The Southeast Oshawa studies are currently undergoing departmental, agency, and public review. Following this part of the process, the City of Oshawa will make recommendations on the future role and function of the Oshawa Harbour and appropriate land-use concepts. The region's economic objectives include maintaining Oshawa Harbour as a commercial port facility until studies have been completed. If these studies support transferring port activity from Oshawa to the St. Marys Cement dock facility in Newcastle, the region may reconsider the role of Oshawa Harbour.

An additional phase of the harbour study will entail land-use and design options and implementation guidelines. It is the Commission's view that the future role of the harbour area should be decided on in an appropriate environmental context; in turn, successfully implementing the City's emerging plans will depend on its ability to bring all parties together at the earliest possible stage. Certainly, it is advantageous for the City to do so from the outset: discussing appropriate recommendations and agreeing on ways to implement a preferred option

by establishing consultations among various provincial ministries, the Oshawa Harbour Commission, the Town of Newcastle, and the Region of Durham.

The City of Oshawa's 1987 Waterfront Development Plan has been particularly successful in providing guidance for establishing and implementing a local trail system that will eventually link the city's downtown to its waterfront.

Planning for the entire city is governed by its 1987 Official Plan. This plan should be revised with a view to incorporating the ecosystem approach, and protecting and enhancing the natural environment, while promoting economic growth and community development.

## **TOWN OF NEWCASTLE**

The Town of Newcastle was established when regional government was introduced in 1974; today, it encompasses three major urban areas: the villages of Newcastle, Bowmanville, and Courtice. Of these, Newcastle and Bowmanville are located near Lake Ontario.

In 1794 the first settlers to the Town of Newcastle arrived in Bowmanville (known as Darlington Mills until the 1830s). The area was named after Charles Bowman, a Scots merchant from Montreal who bought the local store and considerable amounts of land in the town. Bowmanville was incorporated in 1853, and became a town in 1858. By 1878, it had a population of approximately 3,500; today, with more than 14,000 residents, it is the largest urban area in Newcastle.

The Village of Newcastle, incorporated in 1856, was founded in the mid-1800s by people who wished to capitalize on its

location close to the Grand Trunk Railway, which had been constructed from Toronto to Montreal between 1853 and 1856.

The railway brought business to the village: brickyards, builders, and cabinetmakers, among them. Major fires in 1877, 1891, and 1896 destroyed several buildings and many local businesses, not all of which were rebuilt as the village struggled to revive itself. In the 1960s it had a population of more than 1,500, and it is estimated to have 2,500 people today.

The total population of the Town of Newcastle exceeds 45,000 and is expected to be more than 65,000 by 2001. With much of its waterfront undeveloped and its hinterland a mix of urban and agricultural areas (and some industrial uses), the Town has a great opportunity to maintain much of its current natural state.

The Town of Newcastle encompasses most of the Durham Shoreline, with more than 30 kilometres (19 miles) of waterfront, most of it undeveloped, from McLaughlin Bay east to Port Granby. Other substantial portions of Newcastle's waterfront lands are taken up by Darlington Provincial Park, the Darlington Nuclear Generating Station, St. Marys Cement, and the Wilmot Creek Retirement Community.

## **WATERSHED UPDATE**

Local Council first approved the Official Plan for the Township of Darlington in 1960 (renamed, in 1985, the Town of Newcastle Official Plan). This plan, approved in part by the Province of Ontario in 1986 and 1987, currently includes policies for the three major urban areas: environmental and commercial, industrial, and institutional. It does not include policies or land-use designations for the waterfront or rural

areas within Newcastle, portions of which are to be developed in the short and long term, as noted in the revised regional Official Plan.

In recommendations related to the Town of Newcastle, *Watershed* urged that approvals for proposed residential, commercial, industrial, tourism or recreational projects on the Newcastle shoreline be suspended until a local waterfront plan is prepared for the entire waterfront, unless such development proposals conform to the goals and objectives of such a plan and to the Commission's nine principles. Since the recommendations were made, the Town has not approved any waterfront projects.

A review of the Newcastle Official Plan was begun by staff and the first public meeting on it was held in September 1991. The Commission supports the initiative to update the Town's planning policies and reshape them to conform with the regional plan, focusing on managing growth and maintaining and improving the quality of life. A comprehensive study of the town's waterfront area is also under way and a study of the Bowmanville waterfront area is being completed.

The Commission supports this approach which will help the Town guide development of Newcastle and its waterfront area in a way that is most beneficial to those places and to the people in them. It believes that, in future, the Newcastle waterfront could offer an exciting mix of natural and built environments, and a diversity of land uses that are sensitive to their natural surroundings and that range from industrial to residential, mixed-use, and recreational, as well as natural and urban open spaces.

## ST. MARYS CEMENT: INDUSTRY ON THE WATERFRONT

In 1912, a construction materials company, St. Marys Corporation, was founded in St. Marys, Ontario. Today, it is an important Canadian corporation, operating in Canada and the United States.

Since the late 1960s, St. Marys has run a quarry and cement plant on the Bowmanville waterfront in Newcastle. In 1973, the company was permitted to extract materials on the site under the Pits and Quarries Control Act. The following year, St. Marys acquired a provincial waterlot to create docking and storage facilities. In 1988, the plant produced approximately 500,000 tonnes (492,000 tons) of cement, about 8.5 per cent of the provincial total.

To remain internationally competitive, St. Marys plans to expand the capacity of the Bowmanville plant, at a cost of \$160 million, so that it can produce from 2,000 to 5,000 tonnes (1,968 to 4,920 tons) of cement per day; the company has asked the Province to sell it a 32-hectare (80-acre) waterlot immediately west of the existing dock, so that it can enlarge its port facilities to accommodate two maximum-sized bulk carriers. Such facilities are important to enable the company to continue exporting to U.S. markets and they would also meet the bulk cargo needs of other Canadian companies. Furthermore, there is long-term potential for St. Marys to provide a deep-water port at the dock.

However, expanding St. Marys dock and quarry operations would affect wildlife habitat and the adjacent residential community. The company is aware of the value of the natural environment and intends to consider the site's natural attributes in planning future operations. For example, it proposes to compensate for the loss of relatively poor fish habitat, which would result from enlarging the dock, by creating an experimental lake trout spawning shoal in consultation with government and non-government wildlife experts. Similarly, consideration will be given to ways of maintaining wetland values if future quarry expansion affects Westside Beach Marsh, a Class II wetland on the St. Marys site.

By carefully designing the proposed dock, the company hopes to minimize environmental effects; it will monitor the fish shoal and potential effects of the new dock, including erosion and sediment movement.

The concerns of nearby residents include impaired vistas, dust, storm drainage, noise, and vibration from industrial operations, as well as shoreline erosion. St. Marys Cement is attempting to meet these by building landscaped berms, and by good housekeeping practices that will reduce dust and noise. It has expressed its willingness to work with various government agencies and the community at large to protect the environment while successfully operating an industry on the waterfront.

The *Watershed* report also noted that, before any recommendation could be made on future expansion of the St. Marys Cement dock facilities on the Bowmanville

waterfront in Newcastle, further detailed analysis was needed. In 1989, St. Marys applied to the Ministry of Natural Resources to acquire an additional (32-hectare)

80-acre Lake Ontario waterlot that would give it the space needed to expand existing dock facilities through lakefilling. At the present time, the Province is considering whether the proposed fill should be subject to an environmental assessment.

The recommended Greater Toronto bioregion shoreline regeneration plan (Chapter 4) will also help prepare a framework within which to guide the future of the Newcastle waterfront area.

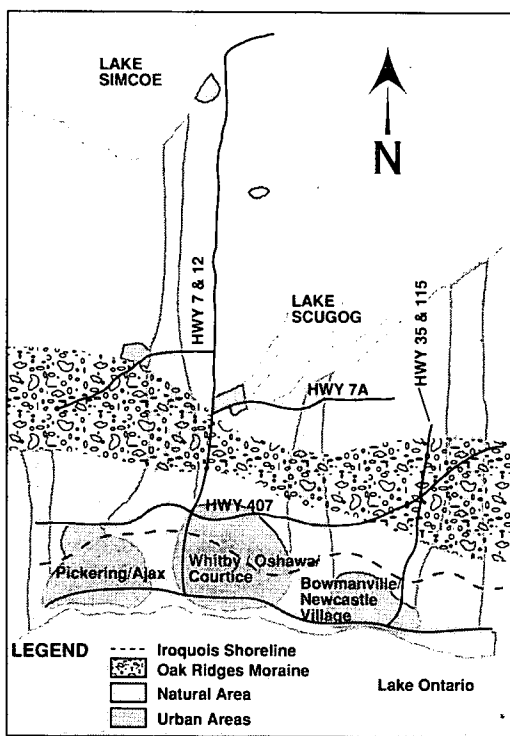
## GREENWAYS

The Oak Ridges Moraine, as it reaches southeast towards the Trent River, has been used as a northern boundary in describing the Greater Toronto bioregion. However, in Durham Region it becomes obvious that there is at least one additional bioregion which should also be considered: the one encompassing the watersheds north and east of the moraine (including the green links between the three regional urban links in Durham south of the Moraine), up to Lake Simcoe and Lake Scugog (see Map 12.1).

There is an opportunity for Durham's regional urban areas to be separated by natural areas of vegetation, and providing wildlife habitat as well as connectors to a regional greenway system, linking the major natural elements of the bioregion.

To date, the Region of Durham has not been very involved in developing the Waterfront Trail endorsed by the Province, but it supports creation of a greenway system linking public access on the waterfront to the river valleys and enhancing natural features in the major open-space system, working with local municipalities and other appropriate agencies to reach these goals.

**Map 12.1 Regional greenway concept, Durham**



Among the key areas in which there are opportunities to develop portions of a Durham greenway system in the near future are:

- publicly owned lands in the Lynde Shores area, stretching into Cranberry Marsh and the Whitby Psychiatric Hospital lands on the Whitby waterfront
- Oshawa waterfront lands surrounding the Second Marsh, which could include public access for educational purposes; and
- those waterfront lands for which there are development proposals, because they offer opportunities for acquiring public rights of way. The Town of Newcastle has the most potential in this respect.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**79.** The Royal Commission recommends that Durham Region, its local municipalities, MTRCA, CLOCA and GRCA continue to review relevant documents including official plans, secondary plans and other waterfront-specific plans to ensure that they incorporate the ecosystem approach and the nine principles described in Part I.

The review should include, but not be limited to:

- a regional waterfront plan encompassing all of Durham's Lake Ontario shoreline;
- a review of the Pickering District Plan; and
- a review of the Ajax District Plan and preparation of an Ajax waterfront plan.

Prior to establishing a comprehensive Durham waterfront plan, waterfront projects should be approved only if proponents show that the development is consistent with the ecosystem approach, the nine principles in Part I and recommendations in Part II.

**80.** The Commission further recommends that Durham Region, the towns of Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, and Newcastle, the City of Oshawa, MTRCA, CLOCA and GRCA participate in preparing the proposed shoreline regeneration plan, including a waterfront greenway and trail, and ensure that any other plans for waterfront areas are reviewed and/or developed in this context.

**81.** The Province of Ontario should negotiate one or more Waterfront Partnership Agreements with the Regional Municipality of Durham, local municipalities, other levels of government and their agencies, and appropriate private-sector bodies, to manage future waterfront activity. While different municipalities are at different stages of waterfront planning, the Waterfront Partnership Agreements should be closely linked to preparation and implementation of the regional waterfront plan, and should include:

- clear identification of the roles and responsibilities of various agencies in implementing waterfront plans in Durham, with the Region taking the co-ordinating role;
- a review of the design of proposed regional water supply and sewage facility plans along the waterfront, to ensure that they do not detract from other waterfront objectives;
- strategies to protect and maintain significant natural habitats including:
  - Frenchman's Bay marshes;
  - Carruther's Creek mouth;
  - Lynde Creek mouth;
  - Pumphouse Marsh;
  - Oshawa Second Marsh;
  - McLaughlin Bay;
  - Wilmot Creek mouth; and
  - Bond Head Bluffs;
- endorsement and implementation of the recommendations made for Frenchman's Bay, in

its *Conservation and Sustainable Development* report, after consultation with the public and with such appropriate agencies as the Town of Pickering, the Region of Durham, MTRCA and the Province of Ontario;

- a regional greenway and trail strategy consistent with recommendations in Chapter 5. This regional greenway and trail system should extend from the Oak Ridges Moraine south to Lake Ontario and north to Lake Simcoe and Lake Scugog.

The natural areas between the three regional urban nodes — Pickering/Ajax, Whitby/Oshawa/Courtice, and Bowmanville/Newcastle — should be re-established and kept in a natural state (see Map 12.1);

- transfer of the Class III wetland at the mouth of Carruther's Creek and a suitable buffer, to a public agency to be managed as a protected wetland; and acquisition of waterfront lands east of the creek by the Town of Ajax or MTRCA, prior to future development; and
- options and implementation strategies for the future of the Oshawa Harbour area; this process should include information on soil and groundwater contamination, appropriate clean-up standards for proposed future land uses, alternative remediation techniques, and cost/benefit analyses of the options.



## **EAST OF DURHAM**

As noted in chapter 1, the *Watershed* report focussed on the waterfront of the Greater Toronto Area. However, with a broader understanding of the ecological features of the bioregion we now venture east of Durham to the Trent River. The Towns of Port Hope, Cobourg, Colborne, Brighton and Trenton are located along Lake Ontario in the County of Northumberland. To date, the Commission has been in contact with the towns of Cobourg and Port Hope, and includes comments specific to these areas here.

## **TOWN OF PORT HOPE**

Port Hope is located at the point where the Ganaraska River meets Lake Ontario. In 1793, the first 27 settlers arrived in what was originally named Smith's Creek, and was later renamed Port Hope, in honour of Colonel Henry Hope, a lieutenant governor of the colony. By 1834, the town's population had grown to 1,517 and, by the mid-1900s, it had reached 6,327. Currently, Port Hope has a population of about 11,830 people, which is expected to increase by about 36 per cent over the next decade.

The Ganaraska River contributed significantly to the economic development of Port Hope: historically, it provided the power for saw and grist mills and clean water used by distilleries, making Port Hope a thriving centre of industry and trading until the beginning of the 20th century, when competition from larger centres became increasingly fierce.

Today, the Ganaraska River, which flows to Port Hope southeast from the

## EARLY ECOSYSTEM PLANNING: THE GANARASKA WATERSHED

Although concepts like the ecosystem approach, watershed planning, and quality of life may seem to be new additions to our mental maps, they have existed and been applied for many decades. The 1944 Ganaraska Watershed report is an early and exciting example of their use; while terminology has changed in the years since then, many ideas and goals remain unchanged.

In 1941, citizens concerned about the environmental health of Canada, and of Ontario in particular, met at what later became known as the Guelph Conference to formulate a conservation program and lobby government. The Dominion and Ontario governments responded by agreeing to collaborate in a survey of the Ganaraska watershed and to publish a follow-up report. But another 48 years passed before the two governments actually established a joint inquiry including land-use matters: this Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront. One of the most significant innovations of the original Ganaraska study – the use of natural boundaries, rather than political boundaries, to determine land-use planning borders – has been used by the Royal Commission.

The Ganaraska was chosen as an example of conservation study for all of Canada. Among the most significant environmental matters of the time were related issues of erosion and flooding; toxic pollution, urban sprawl, and atmospheric change still lay in the future. Instead, terrible years of drought had alerted people to the vulnerability of Canada's soils. Photographs show the desert-like northern reaches of the Ganaraska watershed, with its sand dunes and washed-out gullies.

While those who carried out the Ganaraska study in the 1940s did not use the term "ecosystem approach" (it had yet to be coined), that they understood its value is evident in even a single paragraph of their report:

Natural resources form a delicately balanced system in which all the parts are interdependent, and they cannot be handled piece-meal. The present situation requires the co-ordination of existing relevant knowledge and its amplification where necessary, and then the development of a comprehensive plan for treating the natural resources on a wide public basis.

The study's first step was to connect existing environmental problems with historical land-use patterns in order to gain a better understanding of the nature and extent of problems. In the early 19th century, lumber was Ganaraska's main industry: between 1793 and 1861, 38 saw mills operated in the region. Agriculture spread in the wake of the felling of forests. Together, these two land uses helped create erosion and flooding problems in the Ganaraska watershed. Without tree roots to bind the soil, and trees to soften the impact of falling rain, soils were easily washed away. And without tree roots to trap moisture, rain or sudden snow melts led to torrential floods, resulting in heavy property damage and occasional loss of life.

Following a survey of the climate, soils, farms, natural areas, vegetation, wildlife, areas suffering from erosion, and land uses (similar to today's "state of the environment")



reports), recommendations were made to rehabilitate the watershed. They included reforestation of approximately 8,100 hectares (20,000 acres) — particularly of the delicate soils of the Oak Ridges Moraine — water retention ponds, improved agricultural practices (which included a recommendation that fragile soils be taken out of production), and the creation of several recreational centres. With the end of World War II in sight, the report's authors saw these remedial measures as providing important job creation opportunities for returning soldiers.

The report also called for provincial legislation that would combine the best features of two existing conservation programs “so that conservation projects on needy areas may be initiated immediately after the necessary local requirements of the Act are compiled with the municipalities concerned.” Two years later, in 1946, the Ontario government responded and passed the Conservation Authorities Act.

Source: Richardson, A. H. 1944. *A report on the Ganaraska watershed: a study in land use with plans for the rehabilitation of the area in the post-war period.* Toronto: Ontario. Dept. of Planning and Development.



*The desert-like northern reaches of the Ganaraska Watershed, circa 1940s*

Oak Ridges Moraine in Newcastle, is an important recreational resource, home to thousands of rainbow trout and other species. Fishers come to the Ganaraska to participate in an annual salmon hunt or other fishing events.

Portions of the lower Ganaraska River are subject to erosion and severe annual flooding. Therefore, Port Hope has constructed concrete and stone channels to hold flood waters and has recently completed

the Caven Street Erosion Control Project. This involved lining the river banks with armourstone to prevent erosion.

The waterfront area west of the Ganaraska is occupied by a beach parkette and by the Eldorado/Cameco uranium refinery. The latter industrial site is characterized by noise, odours, and contaminated soils, discouraging public use of the lakefront and commercial, residential, and other land uses in the vicinity.

East of the Ganaraska River are a sewage treatment plant and the Esco industrial area, which includes an abandoned paint factory. Most of the remaining land along the eastern shoreline is publicly owned, providing recreational opportunities for fishing, hiking, boating, and swimming. Clear access routes leading to and connecting waterfront areas are limited and are currently being considered by the Town.

The Port Hope Harbour at the mouth of the Ganaraska River is a spawning ground in spring and fall for a number of fish species, including brown trout, rainbow trout, lake trout, and Pacific salmon. Unfortunately, harbour waters and sediments are contaminated by radionuclides from former radium and uranium refining operations, as well as by high levels of phosphorus, nitrates, and metals. The levels of many of the contaminants exceed the Guidelines for Open Disposal of Dredged Materials set by the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. At present, the harbour is the focus of a Remedial Action Plan (RAP).

East of Port Hope Harbour is Gage Creek, which also flows from the Oak Ridges Moraine. There is a wetland area at its mouth that contains marsh vegetation including wetland tree species. Tests of the creek and nearby areas indicate poor water quality with high levels of nutrients and bacteria, as well as maximum summer temperatures that are too high for rainbow trout.

Conceptual plans have been prepared for remediating Gage Creek and other contaminated sites in the Port Hope area. The federal government will select and prepare a storage site for contaminated materials, a process that could be completed within five years, and clean-up will begin after this time.

In February 1991, the Town of Port Hope released *Town of Port Hope: Waterfront Master Planning Study*, which emphasizes the need to enhance tourism and recreation, and recommends that planning policies be altered to ensure that the Town's waterfront areas become a focus for public use. According to the master plan, policies of the Port Hope Official Plan should ensure that environmentally sensitive areas are protected, diverse land uses co-exist along the river and lakefronts, and that public access and recreational opportunities on the waterfront are improved. These goals are supported by the Commission as they are in accordance with the nine principles for waterfront regeneration.

In response to the waterfront study, the Town of Port Hope council approved formation of the Port Hope Waterfront Implementation Committee which is now involved in its first project, construction of a new harbour on the east side of the mouth of the Ganaraska. The purpose is to improve the Town's economy and enable Port Hope's citizens to reclaim the waterfront as a people place; the new facilities might also attract more tourists to Port Hope, increasing the Town's revenue and generating new jobs.

A lakefront park and a public marina with facilities that include a restaurant are planned for the new harbour. The town proposes to use lakefill in some places to provide areas for onshore marina facilities; planning for the Port Hope waterfront should be guided by the shoreline regeneration plan described earlier in this report.

A Greenways Subcommittee was formed by the Town to co-ordinate the planning and development of walkways and paths along the lakefront, Gage Creek, and the Ganaraska River. It has fully endorsed

the waterfront trail concept described in *Watershed* and in the provincial report, *The Waterfront Trail: First Steps from Concept to Reality* (Reid et al. 1991). Members of the subcommittee are currently engaged in rehabilitating the Gage Creek Wetland area in order to restore its natural elements (marsh, waterfowl nesting areas) and to develop trails linked to the proposed waterfront network.

## TOWN OF COBOURG

Originally named Amherst, the Town of Cobourg was founded in 1798 and renamed to honour the marriage of Princess Charlotte to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg. By the 1830s, the community had established itself as a regional centre with a population of about 1,000; by the middle of this century, population had increased to 7,818. Today it is home to more than 15,000 people, which is expected to increase by about 20 per cent in the next decade.

Cobourg has a number of public buildings of architectural and/or historical significance: Victoria Hall, also known as the Town Hall, was completed in 1860 and remains an impressive example of mid-Victorian architecture, embellished with detailed carvings. The Hall is the home of the Northumberland Art Gallery and the Victoria Hall Concert Hall. Cobourg's Old Victoria College, established in 1836, also has historical resonance: its first president was Reverend Egerton Ryerson, an educator who attracted many visitors, including actors and musicians, to the college, and who went on to establish Ontario's school system.

Construction of a harbour in the 1840s on Cobourg's beach stimulated the town's growth and the harbour soon became a busy port from which iron ore and other

products were exported. A century later, after World War II, industry expanded and Cobourg became the home of several leading international companies in Canada, including General Foods and Curtis Products. However, commerce in the harbour had declined by the 1950s and development plans for alternative uses of the land have since been proposed.

Among concerns about the present condition of the Cobourg Harbour area is the presence of contaminated soil on industrial sites in the harbour lands, most of which is attributed to oil and gas spillage from storage tanks. The Town of Cobourg recognizes the need to develop and enhance the harbour area so that it becomes more accessible, usable, and attractive for residents and tourists.

In late 1990, the mayor of Cobourg asked Town staff to review *Watershed* with a view to adapting and applying its recommendations to the Cobourg waterfront area. The staff report, which endorsed the relevant *Watershed* recommendations, found that some recommendations could have implications for the town's future, while others could be adopted by policy documents or implemented through departmental programs. For example, an ecosystem-based policy to deal with waterfront issues could be included in the Official Plan, as could a policy for a waterfront trail. The staff report has been approved by council and steps are being taken to incorporate specific *Watershed* recommendations into the Town's planning.

A Harbour Area Secondary Plan (1989) has been approved by the Town of Cobourg and by the Province of Ontario. It will guide development of the harbour area, based on principles of accessibility and

attractiveness to residents and tourists. The plan also notes that development should support the downtown, physically and commercially, and should maintain the town's existing scale and character. Proposed improvements include creation of parkland, promenades, pathways, and a plaza; expansion of marina facilities; and development of mixed land uses.

The Town of Cobourg will have opportunities to improve its harbour area and waterfront in the short and long term. The Commission believes that future development should be guided by comprehensive policies that deal with issues including, but not limited to, environmental protection, shoreline regeneration, appropriate land-use designations, and incorporation of public access.

There is an opportunity for Northumberland County and its member municipalities, especially the towns along Lake Ontario, to participate in future studies on the Greater Toronto bioregion.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

82. The Royal Commission recommends that the towns of Port Hope and Cobourg, the County of Northumberland and the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority continue to review relevant documents including official plans, secondary plans, and other waterfront-specific plans to ensure that they incorporate the ecosystem approach and the nine waterfront principles described in Part I.
83. The Commission further recommends that the towns of Port Hope, Cobourg,

Colborne, Brighton and Trenton, the County of Northumberland, the Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority and the Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority participate in preparing the proposed shoreline regeneration plan (Chapter 4), including a waterfront greenway and trail, and ensure that any other plans for waterfront areas are reviewed and/or developed in this context.