



Members of the Mayor's Waterfront Task Force in Pickering visited a number of other Lake Ontario communities early in their process, providing inspiration and resulting in greater efficiency and more varied approaches to their own waterfront plan. The City has recently established a Waterfront Coordinating Committee which is now assisting with a comprehensive approach to the management of Frenchman's Bay and its watersheds, an exciting program of public art and signage, a design study for the revitalization of the Liverpool Road area, and the development of a Millennium Square and Trail on the waterfront.

The Great Lakes Community Foundations' Environmental Collaborative is a project coordinated by the Council of Michigan Foundations to help community foundations build their capacity to protect and restore the environment. As part of this project, the Toronto Community Foundation and Waterfront Regeneration Trust have initiated a network of Canadian and US community foundations around Lake Ontario and the Niagara River. The network is learning more about environmental issues and potential roles for community foundations; sharing information about activities; and initiating collaborative activities. The participating foundations recognize that they are in a unique position to provide leadership and focus a wide range of community interests on projects that integrate economic, social and environmental objectives.

*The lessons we have learned are not specific to the waterfront. Mainly it is the critical value of public engagement in the process. With community input we have articulated a collaborative waterfront vision and got buy-in for a wide range of participation. We couldn't have done that working as government alone.*

**Mayor Wayne Arthurs, City of Pickering**

## SET THE STAGE WITH GOOD PLANNING

Comprehensive, ecosystem-based planning sets the stage for re-investment along the waterfront. The planning process must be transparent and include grass-roots involvement if public support and assistance in implementation are to be assured. Where this was not done well, as in the early proposals for the Waterfront Trail in Northumberland County, much work was needed to allay fears that the Trail would be imposed on private properties.

Community-based planning involves local residents and businesses in deciding on their future, brings agency staff together, directs developers to incorporate public objectives, and establishes the policy framework for waterfront revitalization, trail building, environmental restoration and other priorities.



*The Integrated Shoreline Management Plan, prepared by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority with assistance from the Trust and other partners for the Scarborough waterfront, is the first of a new generation of ecosystem-based shoreline plans integrating physical, biological and cultural factors. It addresses public use, natural heritage, public and property safety, and shoreline regeneration.*

*Hamilton's West Harbourfront Development Study provides for a dramatic transformation of vacant and under-utilized industrial and railway lands to a mixed use community with housing, commercial, retail, recreation, and entertainment uses, combined with an open space network and waterfront parks. The concept plan has become an important tool to guide capital developments by the municipality and to evaluate development proposals to ensure that the community vision for the area is realized. Progress includes acquisitions of land and waterlots, the development of 3.4 km (2.1 miles) of waterfront trail, renovation by a private developer of an abandoned CN station to create a banquet/conference facility, purchases of land by the private sector to prepare for redevelopment, and a review of transportation options in the area.*



In 1998, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust helped Buffalo and Fort Erie develop an International Waterfront Gateway Strategy, in response to their shared desire to improve their waterfronts and attract more visitors off the Peace Bridge that links them across the Niagara River. The Strategy defines a single international gateway with connections to the assets, attractions, events, activities and business centres of both communities. Many of the projects recommended in the Strategy are now being implemented.



A Citizens' Map was used to summarize the results of tours and workshops organized by the Waterfront Regeneration Trust in 1997 for the citizens of Niagara Falls, New York as part of a process to plan for the future of the City and the surrounding region. The Map is a poster which depicts the local and regional assets and opportunities based on the heritage of the community and its relationship to the Niagara River, the Falls and State parks. It has become a planning framework and tool used by the City and the recently established Waterfront Revitalization Task Force to help set priorities, develop partnerships, guide investment and improve the overall quality of life for the people who live, work and visit the area.

*We need big plans, like the Waterfront Trail and most recently the Fung Waterfront Revitalization Task Force. If you go at it piecemeal, you can end up with a jigsaw puzzle with only a few pieces and nothing around them.*

**Dick O'Brien, Chair, Toronto and Region Conservation**



Sometimes a site specific plan, such as the one prepared for Lemoine Point Conservation Area on the Kingston Waterfront in 1995, can be a stimulus for a broader planning initiative. In this case, the Eastern Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Waterfront Working Group formed in 1996 and initiated the application of a bioregional perspective to a broad stretch of waterfront and watersheds from Glenora to Gananoque.

Changes in waterfront land use provide opportunities for public access, habitat restoration and improved shoreline management, especially when the appropriate policies are in place to take advantage of them. As early as 1974, the Town of Oakville established a visionary policy to require dedication of a minimum 15 metre (18 yds) strip of waterfront land for linear public parkland during redevelopment, as a condition of development approval. Since then, many other municipalities have established similar requirements. The most recent example is Regional Niagara, which is currently developing a Policy Plan amendment to ensure that the Waterfront Trail is accommodated whenever redevelopment occurs along Lake Ontario.

Over the past decade, the City of Toronto has made some major changes in planning philosophy and practice, reflected in a recent report prepared to indicate directions for the new official plan, **Toronto at the Crossroads: Shaping our Future**. The report introduces five campaigns – for beautiful places, sustainable transportation, housing, greening, and a dynamic downtown. Some of the City's new thinking has already been expressed in the revitalization of the formerly industrial King-Spadina and King-Parliament areas – through designation as reinvestment areas, accompanied by innovative and flexible techniques to encourage private sector investment in mixed use development. Other initiatives that will be incorporated into the official plan, and that will have a significant effect on the waterfront, include the Environmental Plan; the Mayor's waterfront vision **Our Toronto Waterfront! the wave of the future**; and the report March 200 of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force, **Our Toronto Waterfront: Gateway to the New Canada**.