

- decrease need for commuting by providing a local balance of employment and residential opportunities;
- are environmentally friendly in form and function;
- minimize conflicts with adjacent communities or uses; and
- are designed and managed to improve microclimate and promote greater year-round comfort and use.

- residential and recreational;
- industrial and commercial;
- built and natural environments;
- large- and small-scale;
- active and passive;
- busy and quiet; and
- free and user-pay.

Design, use, and management of waterfront places should enhance safety and minimize risks caused by:

- threats to personal safety from other users;
- flooding and erosion; and
- incidents involving hazardous materials.

## AFFORDABLE



Waterfront development and management should be undertaken in ways that provide opportunities for economic renewal and for efficient use of limited government and private-sector resources.

Where possible, social, environmental, and economic objectives should be integrated with each other, in order to achieve them as effectively as possible. For example:

- projects might be more affordable if partners co-ordinate activities and share resources;
- projects could be designed to yield multiple benefits;
- a healthy environment is a more productive setting for economic activities.

## DIVERSE



The waterfront should provide diverse landscapes, places, wildlife habitats, uses, programs, and experiences. This will offer varied opportunities for visiting and resident people, as well as for resident, migrating, and over-wintering wildlife.

The mix of land uses and facilities for competing public demands within environmental limits should be balanced between:

- public and private;
- urban and rural;
- regional and local;

A long-term view should be adopted when decisions are being considered so that the full societal and environmental costs of proposed activities become factors in whatever choices are made. For example, incorporating environmental protection at the

outset may reduce the need for environmental rehabilitation later, thus improving long-term affordability and sustainability.

A range of waterfront parks and facilities should be available to provide opportunities for all income groups. Waterfront residential projects should offer a variety of housing types and prices, including affordable and rental housing.

## ATTRACTIVE



Design and landscaping should protect, enhance, and create distinctive and memorable places along the waterfront. This means excellence in design of neighbourhoods and other developments, individual buildings, transportation elements, parks, recreational facilities, outdoor furniture, and other amenities.

Design on the waterfront should:

- protect vistas and views of the lake;
- provide a sense of continuity with the past;
- emphasize sensitive design and massing of buildings;
- consider the relationships among buildings, open spaces, and the water;
- use harmonious colours, textures, and materials; and
- include a range of landscape types, from wild and natural to manicured and formal.

## SUMMARY

Ecosystem principles will help to make the most of the qualities of the Greater Toronto waterfront — the historic birthplace of our communities, the source of our drinking water, a home for wildlife, a place for recreation and relaxation, and the setting for vistas across the water.

This waterfront is inextricably linked, not only to the lake, but to the 60 watersheds that drain into it. Together, the waterfront, watersheds, Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine, form a major bioregion in Ontario. But the bioregion is under considerable economic, social, and environmental stress. We can no longer take its economic prosperity or quality of life for granted. It has also become clear that institutional arrangements in the bioregion are often part of the problem; bureaucratic systems are often rigid and jurisdictions fragmented.

In exploring these issues, the Commission found that the ecosystem approach offered some fresh insights and possible new ways of doing things.

By thinking of ecosystems as living systems, of which humans are a part, we can better understand our roles now and our responsibility to future generations. In the past, decision-making has often been based primarily on economic and social objectives, often at a cost to the environment. The ecosystem approach is based on the reality that everything is connected to everything else, which means that environmental considerations must be part of the decision-making process, so that relationships within ecosystems are viewed as comprising three interlinked circles: environment, community, and economy.

Viewing the bioregion as a whole helps to enhance the sense of place, as well as

understanding of the links within it: between city and countryside, natural and cultural processes, water and land, economic activities and quality of life. It also shows how regionally based economic strategies can be developed for the Greater Toronto region, building on existing advantages.

It is apparent that, to achieve healthy, sustainable communities, we must find ways to adapt and improve many processes for studying, analysing, planning, reviewing, consulting, and decision-making. The changes already under way are reflected in various organizations and processes — the work of the Brundtland Commission; the existence of national, provincial, and territorial round tables on environment and economy; new initiatives by many municipalities, conservation authorities, environmental groups, and government agencies; and increased public awareness of the issues. The Royal Commission's work demonstrated how the ecosystem approach could be applied in specific areas and situations, as described in subsequent chapters of this report.

The bioregion's future health and quality of life, as well as its environmental and economic sustainability, will depend on how we choose to manage the assets we have. The Commission believes that using an ecosystem approach can help to assure a future that is indeed clean, green, connected, open, accessible, useable, diverse, affordable, and attractive.