

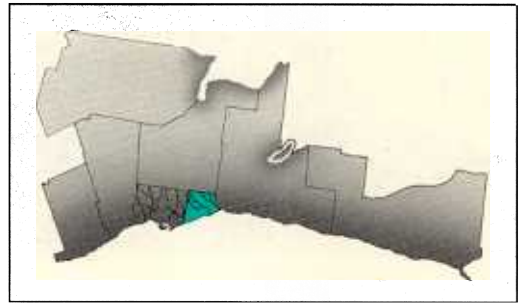


CHAPTER 11: SCARBOROUGH

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.

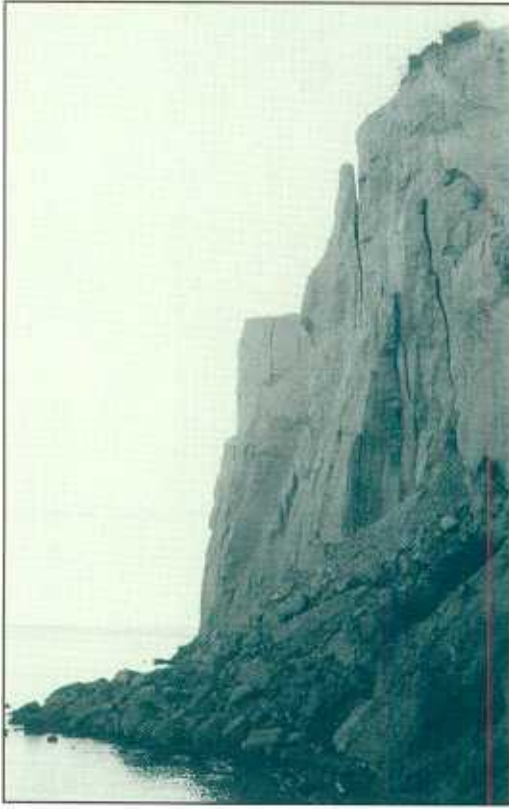
The Scarborough waterfront comprises 20 kilometres (12 miles) or 40 per cent of Metro's shoreline. The area contains the highest proportion of single detached dwellings and owned housing along the Metropolitan Toronto waterfront.

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.

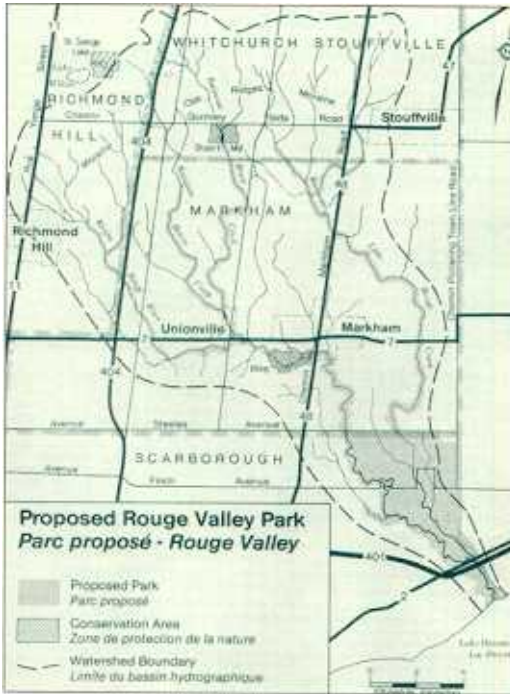
In its first interim report (1989), the Royal Commission supported the views of many interest groups, recommending

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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

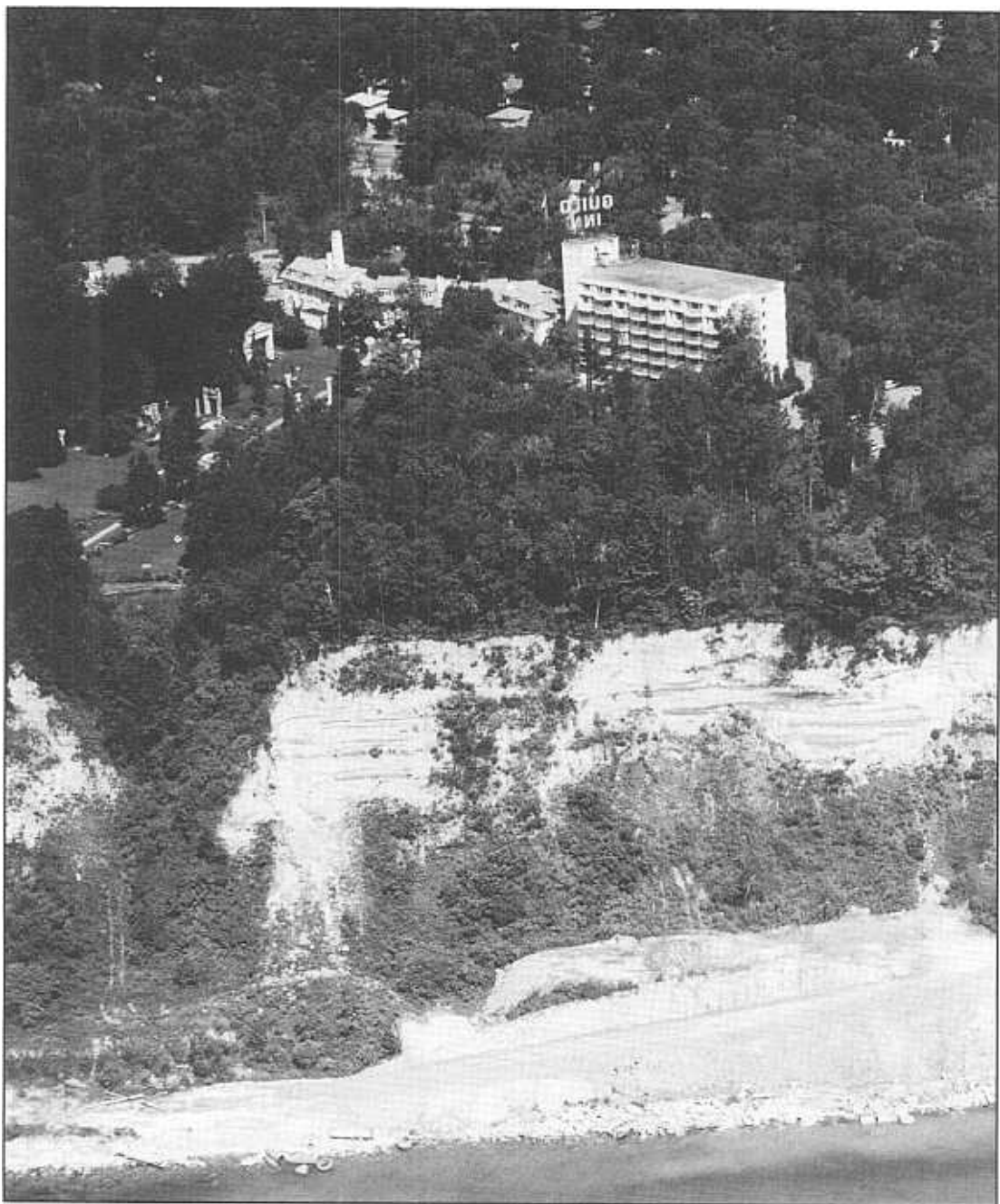
in the Rouge and Petticoat Creek watersheds (provincial land assembly), and tablelands along the top of the valleys.

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.

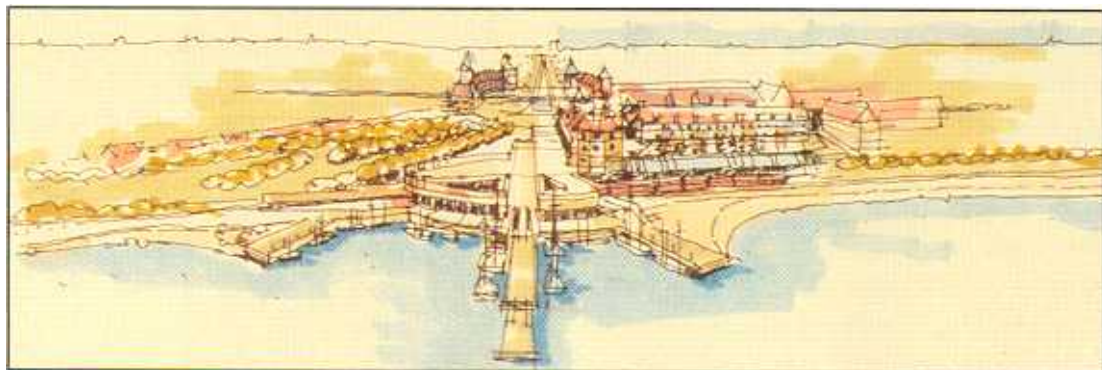
PLANNING INITIATIVES

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.