

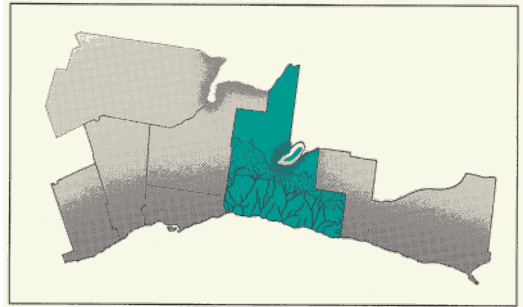


CHAPTER 12: DURHAM

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 committee 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.

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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