



REGENERATION AND RECOVERY

THE INTRODUCTION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WILL HAVE A REVOLUTIONARY EFFECT AS FAR REACHING AS THE INTRODUCTION OF STEAM, ELECTRICITY AND ELECTRONICS IN THEIR TIME. IT IS ABOVE ALL AN INTELLECTUAL REVOLUTION. (A REPORT FROM 45 LEADING INDUSTRIALISTS TITLED *RESHAPING EUROPE*.)

This assessment of the impact of sustainable development on the future of their continent by leading European industrialists squares exactly with the conclusions of the Royal Commission's 1990 interim report, *Watershed*: the environment and the economy are mutually dependent. Economic development and good quality of life cannot be sustained in an ecologically deteriorating environment.

The way we choose to treat the Greater Toronto waterfront is critical: if governments, the private sector, and individuals recognize — and act on — the need to resolve past environmental problems and forge strategies to protect the waterfront now and in the future, we will indeed have crossed a watershed.

In the 18 months since the Commission published its *Watershed* report, the Greater Toronto regional community, and Canada itself, have been passing through a difficult phase of self-doubt and uncertainty —

prompted, in part, by the constitutional discussions and, as well, by the downturn in the economy and the sluggish recovery.

In his introductory essay to *The Fourth Morningside Papers*, author-broadcaster Peter Gzowski (1991), speaking about Canada's current problems, says:

I don't know the answers. I'm not even sure — yet that I know all the questions, which as a radio guy, I'm better at than I am at answers anyway. I think they're there, though. I think there is a way out of the mess we've got ourselves into. I don't imagine Canadians will ever be quite the same as we were before, but when I think about that I think of a golf story I know, in which a man is coming in from the 18th hole and someone asks him if he's played his usual game, and he answers, "I never do".

"The way we were before", in other words, is really a whole lot of ways, and

which ones you think — or thought — were important always depended on where you were and what was weighing on your mind at the time.

For what it's worth, I think we need a victory now. Desperately. By "victory" I mean only something that goes right, something we can agree on, even if it's only the process by which we try to mend things and not — yet — the contents of a new deal. To use a sports term, we have to turn the momentum around. We have to get some people together to say, "Look, we agree on these things, now maybe we can get down to what Lester Pearson used to call 'expanding the common ground.'"

What is true on a national level is also applicable to Toronto and the experience of the Royal Commission. As its work developed and expanded over three years, the Commission became more and more impressed with the hopes, dreams, talents, needs, and frustrations of

the people and organizations we worked with: municipal and regional governments, federal and provincial ministries, business and labour leaders, environmentalists, community activists, and citizens from all walks of life. All are interested in working towards Peter Gzowski's "victory". All want to get on with the job of developing the waterfront; planning and building for sustainability; implementing the environmental imperatives; and regenerating historic and special places.

This fourth section of the final report brings together all these perspectives and proposed solutions in a strategy for implementing this report.

The strategy involves six basic steps:

1. Adopt the ecosystem approach, and the nine waterfront principles (clean, green, useable, diverse, open, accessible, connected, affordable, attractive).
2. Establish or adjust waterfront plans to ensure they reflect the ecosystem



Mouth of Duffin Creek, Ajax

approach and the principles —
i.e., plan for sustainability.

3. Secure intergovernmental co-operation, agreements, and commitments on what needs to be done, the priorities, who does what, and the time-frames for design, construction, and delivery.
4. Consolidate capital budgets and pool resources as necessary to move projects forward.
5. Create the framework and conditions for private-sector involvement; capitalize on its enterprise, initiative, creativity, and capability for investment.
6. Establish partnerships: among governments, and between the public and private sector, in accordance with planning and project requirements.

As far as the first two steps are concerned, the ecosystem approach is a way of doing things as well as a way of thinking; adopting its values and philosophy leads to different ways of doing things. Increasingly, these values are being accepted by governments, by many companies in the private sector, and by the community at large. The ecosystem approach is the cornerstone of *Our Common Future*, the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), and is reflected in the mandate of the many round tables that were created in response to it.

In 1978, the International Joint Commission included a commitment to restore and maintain the integrity of the

Great Lakes Basin ecosystem as part of the renewed Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. The goal of the federal government's Green Plan for a Healthy

Environment (1990) is to balance economic growth with an environment that sustains life today and for future generations. In responding to *Watershed*, the Government of

Ontario adopted, as provincial policy, the ecosystem approach to planning.

This final report contains many examples of government agencies, businesses, landowners, and developers modifying plans and activities to accommodate this approach. The result is a smoother, faster system of project approvals and decisions, which means easier, more efficient investment and job creation that offers better results for the environment and for the economy.

Step three in the strategy calls for intergovernmental co-operation, agreements, and commitments. The sheer number of public agencies involved on the waterfront (more than 75 by the Royal Commission's count) has led to fragmentation, gridlock, and a lack of public accountability. The idea that there must be sweeping reform of public jurisdiction and administration to reduce the number of agencies and the levels involved as a necessary precondition of regenerating the waterfront, is hardly new:

The eyes of the administration are focused on the waterfront.

In the formative years of Metro politicians and planners looked north,

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