



*Oakville's Gairloch Gardens*

open space and vistas, even in places where the city touches the waterfront. Implicit in this desire for an open waterfront is the desire to create and protect views to the water from adjacent streets or activity areas.

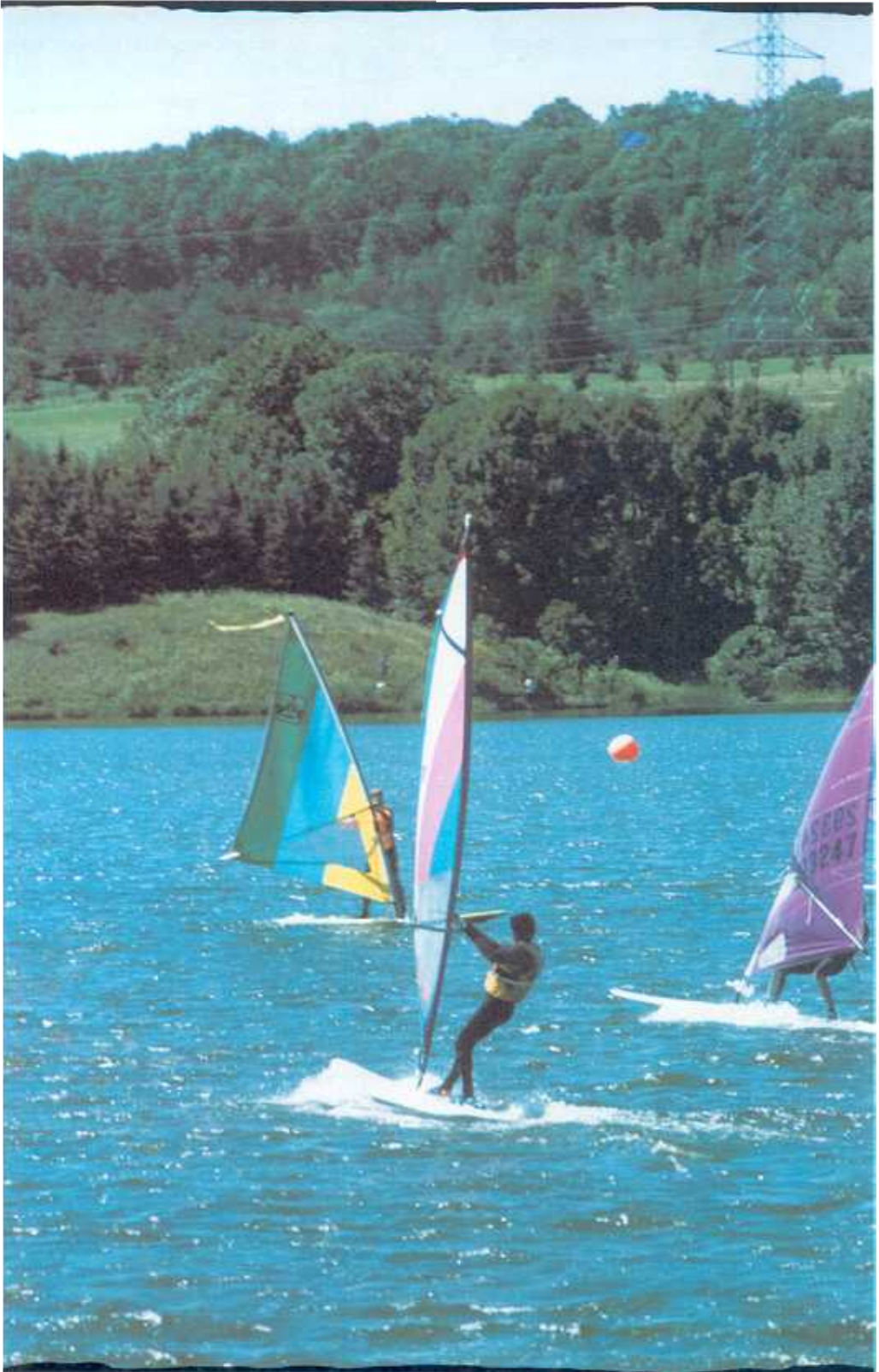
In a few cases, waterfront lands that are actually public have, in effect, been privatized by design features that obscure access or make the public feel unwelcome. For example, many people are not aware that the land at the foot of Bay Street, which has the look and feel of a private space for residents only, is actually public land and free for their use. The design of public lands on the water near large urban redevelopment projects, such as the Etobicoke Motel Strip, must be carefully reviewed to ensure that they are visible and welcoming.

Being able to walk along the water's edge is one measure of how open the waterfront feels. The City of Toronto and the Town of Oakville are among municipalities

that have established policies and programs to bring the water's edge into public ownership. Their programs are commendable and should be explored by other municipalities. However, it should be remembered that the goal is public access, not necessarily public ownership — for example, in situations where easements or access agreements for private or institutional lands can provide appropriate access at much lower costs. Whatever the methods, redevelopment activities along the waterfront should provide all possible opportunities for people to gain public access along the water's edge.

### Accessible

- ~ All waterfront activity nodes and communities should be accessible by public transit as well as by road, with increasing emphasis on transit.
- ~ The waterfront should be easily accessible by foot or bicycle, with major



*Summer sailboarding on Kelso Lake, Kelso Conservation Area, Milton*

improvements where necessary to overcome the barriers presented by road and rail corridors.

The waterfront should be safe, and accessible to the disabled as well as all other sectors of society.

Transportation planning in the waterfront area should:

- ~ take into account the impact of automotive traffic on the environment;
- ~ establish an appropriate balance among rapid transit, surface transit, road transportation, and passenger rail;
- ~ relate waterfront, environmental, and land-use objectives to transportation capacity priorities;
- ~ strengthen commuter, freight, and inter-city rail and air services, as appropriate;

- ~ explore such innovative facilities as waterborne passenger transportation.

Green space along the Greater Toronto Waterfront takes its form within an essentially urban context; as Bill McLean of the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority pointed out to the Commission, the concept of green space itself is essentially an urban one.

Within this context, and from a broader environmental perspective, developing attractions for large numbers of people without providing effective public transit would be short-sighted at best. Public transit to waterfront sites not only relieves the pollution and congestion associated with vehicle traffic, it also makes the waterfront more accessible to people of all incomes and reduces the amount of open space used for parking lots.

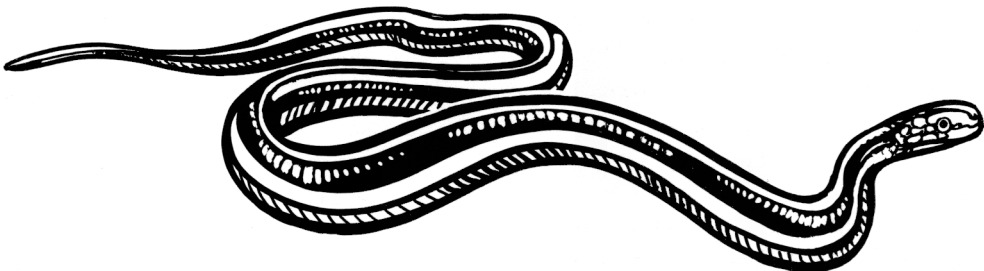
One of the key elements of accessibility to the waterfront is the way in which smaller parcels of waterfront green space are integrated into the community. Areas within reach of foot and bicycle traffic reduce the need for car travel and parking. Some communities, including Toronto, Oshawa, and Ajax, have made considerable progress in linking waterfront parks to the community, using valley trails, formal walkways, and related green spaces; others should consider such links.

Integration is sometimes more difficult. For example, Toronto's Parkdale community is effectively cut off from the waterfront by expressway and train corridors. One potential solution is construction of a Parkdale

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I'm truly sorry man's dominion  
has broken nature's social union  
an' justifies that ill opinion,  
which makes thee startle  
at me, thy poor, earth-born  
companion,  
an' fellow mortal!

Burns, R. 1969. "To a Mouse, on Turning Her Up in Her Nest, with a Plough, November 1785", In *Burns' poems and songs*, J. Kingsley. London: Oxford University Press.





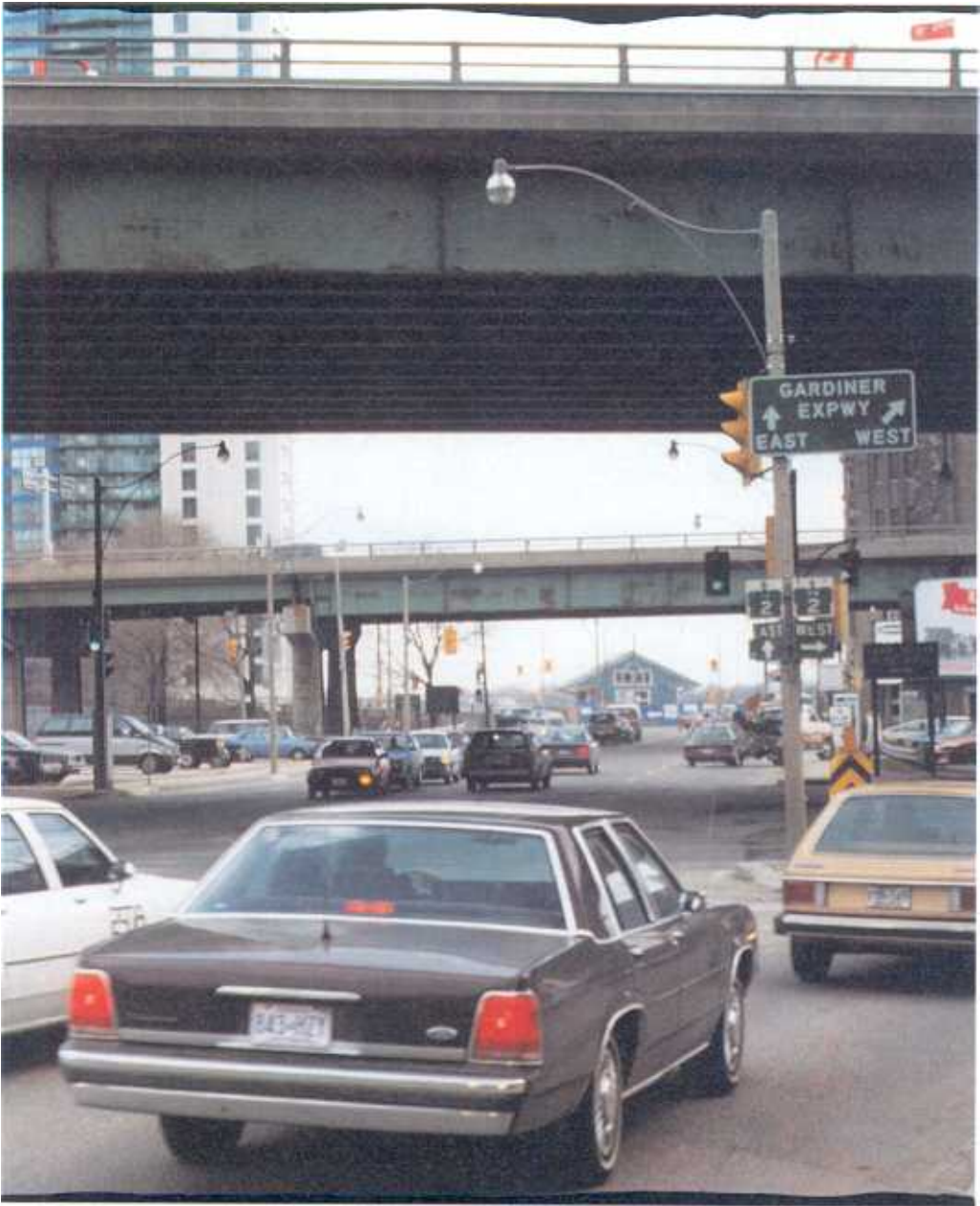
Deck, which would extend the urban area across these barriers towards the water. In much of Scarborough, access to the water's edge is restricted by the steep bluffs there. Ongoing erosion control work by MTRCA, coupled with development of stairways in some locations, should gradually improve access.

Concerns about the accessibility of the waterfront are particularly crucial for children, the elderly, and the physically chal-

*The Martin Goodman Trail, Cherry Beach*

lenged. In recent years, some Harbourfront programs have made real attempts to reach out to these groups, but much more could be done.

Accessibility to the waterfront is reduced for women by concerns about their physical safety. For example, the desolate, confusing pedestrian approaches created by the railway underpasses and the Gardiner/Lake Shore



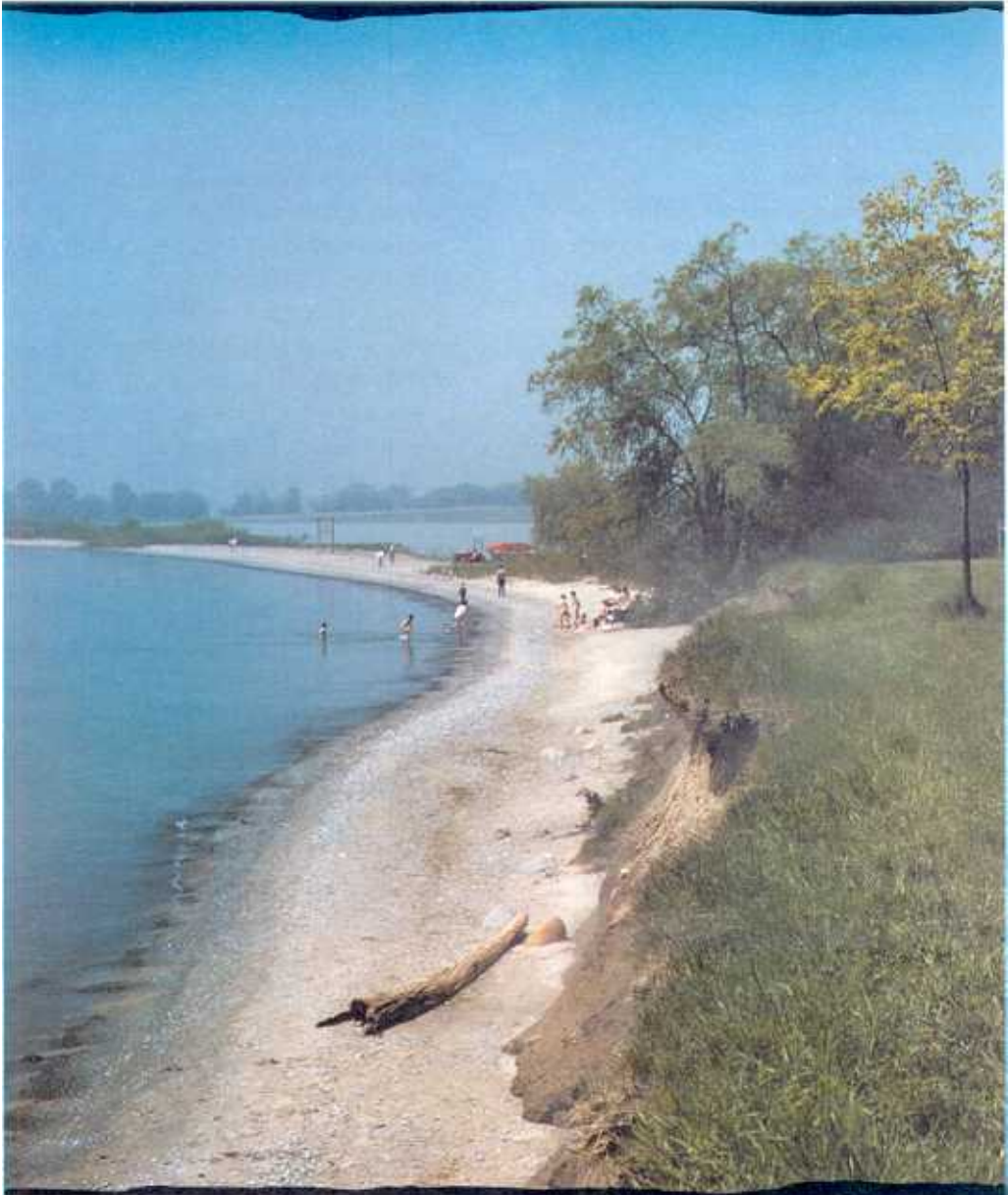
*York Street access to the Waterfront*

Corridor are obstacles in the Central Waterfront.

Any future study on improved facilities should incorporate the need to ensure that the waterfront is physically and psychologically accessible to all groups, not just to some. Fear for personal safety must not be allowed to become a barrier to full use and enjoyment of the waterfront. Safety is

enhanced when facilities are well used, well lit, and clearly visible. Attractive designs, a rich palette of textures and colours, inviting fragrances and sounds can do a great deal to make the waterfront attractive to everyone.

Many sections of the waterfront have the regional roads and railways necessary to move people and goods between communities. In some cases, the routes are linked



to waterfront industry or activity centres, but most transportation facilities simply pass through the waterfront area, with little relation to land uses there.

In the past, the development of these facilities has been based almost solely on transportation needs, with little consideration of their effects on the waterfront, the quality of the environment or surrounding land uses. The results in the Central Waterfront have been detrimental and long-lasting, with access to the lake severely constrained by a broad

*Natural shoreline in Darlington Provincial Park, Newcastle*

swath of railway lines and the Lake Shore/Gardiner Corridor.

The ecosystem approach to waterfront transportation issues means recognizing the way various aspects affect each other — traffic congestion, the balance of transportation types, the need to renew the existing system, the quality of the waterfront environment, access to the waterfront, and major

land-use decisions in the surrounding area. Therefore, decisions on the future of Toronto's transportation system cannot be made on the basis of projected vehicle counts and road capacities alone — they must be based on broader considerations.

At the same time, firm decisions on the future of key transportation facilities — most notably the Lake Shore/Gardiner Corridor — are vital to a host of other planning issues. All along the Gardiner Expressway, from Exhibition Place in the west through Harbourfront and the Railway Lands in the core to Ataritari and the proposed St. Lawrence Park development in the east, there are major redevelopment proposals that would be affected, even reshaped, by a decision on the Gardiner. In this context, procrastination could mean higher costs and fewer opportunities in future to create a green and healthy city.

There have been suggestions that the Greater Toronto Area could take advantage of its waterfront to provide waterborne passenger services along the Lake Ontario shore. While the feasibility of this concept is uncertain, it is an additional form of public transit, the development of which should be encouraged where appropriate.

## Connected

The waterfront should be linked by continuous pedestrian and bicycle trails from Burlington to Newcastle.

Major green corridors should connect the waterfront, valley systems, and the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Waterfront planning should emphasize connections to the waterfront's natural and cultural heritage.

The concept of a continuous Waterfront Trail has been put forward as part of MTRCA's Greenspace Plan, and is incorporated in several municipal waterfront plans. However, there is currently no mechanism for coordination, to ensure, for example, that muni-

cipal trails connect at the boundaries or that all municipalities embrace the concept of a continuous trail.

A waterfront trail does not always have to be located right along the water's edge, although that should usually be the first choice. A trail could occasionally leave the shore where it was necessary to bypass obstacles or where it was possible to incorporate such features of interest as historic neighbourhoods. In places, the trail might follow quiet residential streets. However, every effort should be made to separate the waterfront trail from busy arterial roads.

The pedestrian and cycling components of the trail should be separate. Where that is not possible, special efforts should be made to create safe and complementary shared trails.

To be successful, a Waterfront Trail must have considerable public support and involvement. A Waterfront Trail membership association could become a driving force in advocating and planning the trail, and could play an important role in its development, maintenance, and promotion. Unlike the existing long-distance trails in rural parts of Ontario, however, a Waterfront Trail in a mostly urban landscape would probably not be feasible unless there were direct provincial and municipal involvement.

As noted previously, the health and quality of the waterfront are closely linked to its adjacent watersheds. Yet in some areas, the intrusions of the city have pinched off the natural connections between the lakefront and the hinterland, which most often occur through river valleys. In order to maintain ecological and recreational connections, special attention should be paid to major corridors up the valleys of Grindstone Creek, Bronte Creek, Sixteen Mile Creek, the Credit, the Humber, the Don, the Rouge, Duffin Creek, Lynde Creek, Oshawa Creek, Bowmanville/Soper Creek, and Wilmot Creek. As well, local initiatives to create or maintain natural corridors in other areas should be fully supported.

In most cases, these valleys serve as connectors between the waterfront and the natural habitats associated with the Oak Ridges Moraine. As well, the City of Burlington's presentation to the Commission pointed out that its staff will be developing a "green linkages policy" that will "consider opportunities to link natural features such as the Escarpment to the waterfront".

Ecological and recreational links across the GTA must be considered in two categories:

rivers. Man's greed will not be satisfied until the Duffin runs as black as the Don.

If that future is to be avoided, strategies must be conceived to protect the entire cross-section of the valley from development, and to establish a top-of-bank buffer at key parts of the headwaters. Bill McLean of the MTRCA outlined its efforts to interpret the "conservation of land" section of its



*Oakville waterfront promenade*

maintenance and restoration. While some streams and valleylands are still of excellent quality, the pressures for development are unrelenting. After praising the cultural and natural values of the Duffin Creek corridor, Jim Wiseman of the Pickering Ajax Citizens Together (PACT) painted a bleak picture of its possible future:

The herons will be the first to go, then the trees, then the farmlands, then the

regulations more broadly, to include the ecological significance of valleylands. This is in contrast to the present practice of considering only erosion problems which, in many cases, can be "engineered" to allow development to proceed on valley slopes, thereby interrupting the integrity of the green corridor. Broadening MTRCA regulations to reflect current ecological values would be an extremely useful step.

Restoration of connecting corridors will require considerable time and public