



investment. For instance, the Commission heard from the Don Valley Task Force about the need to recreate a mouth for the Don, to replace the present “urban orifice”. In his submission, Dr. Mark Taylor said:

We should develop a green corridor between Leslie Street Spit, Cherry Beach, and the Don River valley to facilitate the movement of birds and other animals, the foxes, throughout the City. By planting trees and shrubs along the lower Don, we can extend this corridor, cool the water by providing shade, and improve the aesthetics of this transportation corridor.

Connections along the waterfront can go beyond the physical to include links to our heritage. The need to maintain ties to the past was highlighted in the report of the Parks, Pleasures, and Public Amenities Work Group (see the Royal Commission’s Publication No. 4). Such ties can be made not only by sensitive adaptation of historic buildings, but also by preserving elements of our marine

Toronto Waterfront high-rise development

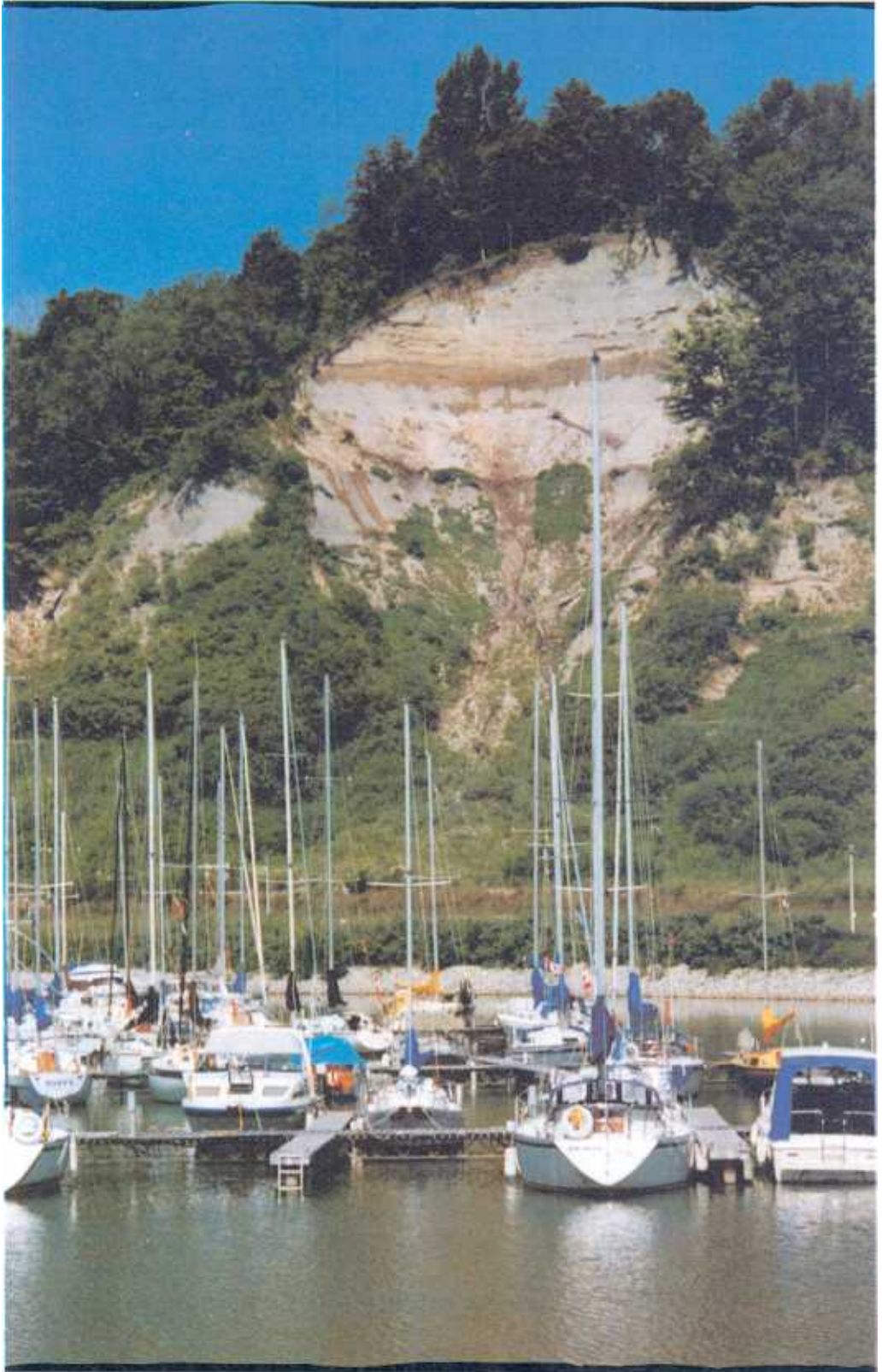
and industrial heritage and of historical patterns of development.

Heritage connections can also contribute to public education. Dr. John Westgate of the University of Toronto suggested that a Green Strategy provides:

an opportunity for educational input on our environment through the provision of facilities and programs



Toronto Island Ferry



Bluffer's Park Marina, Scarborough

that would increase awareness of our environment and give a better understanding of our environmental heritage, especially the geology, archaeology, historical and cultural.



Many would be surprised to learn that the greatest contribution to the health of the nation over the past 150 years was made, not by doctors or hospitals, but by local government.

Parfit, J. 1987. *The health of a city: Oxford, 1770-1974*, Preface. Oxford: Amate Press.

Several educational and interpretive centres have been proposed along the waterfront, including ones at Tommy Thompson Park and Duffin Creek, but none has yet been constructed. Dr. Westgate noted particularly the educational potential at Bluffer's Park and at the Don Valley Brickyards.

Another aspect of public education is the issue of water quality and its restoration. While there is certainly a high degree of awareness that the waterfront is polluted, at least in places, people need a much clearer understanding of the connections between the sources and effects of that pollution, and of the steps needed to restore water quality. As quality improves, the public should also be educated on the progress being made, so that people will continue to support restoration projects and use water resources appropriately. The return of salmon to the Thames River was a powerful symbol of progress against pollution. Our own waterfront needs to develop similar public symbols as measures of progress.

Affordable

- ~ Waterfront parks and facilities should be financially available to all income groups.
- ~ Waterfront residential projects should include affordable housing.

The waterfront should belong to everyone; in economic terms, that means there must be a balance of affordable recreation opportunities and a mix of housing types to allow people at all income levels and of all family types the opportunity to live on or near the waterfront. In the words of the Parks, Pleasures, and Public Amenities Work Group's report (Royal Commission Publication No. 4):

Waterfront communities should not be restricted to only the well-heeled, double income, childless or retired couples so eagerly sought by some condominium developers.

Applying this principle to housing will be difficult, especially as improvements along the waterfront mean that land values escalate even higher. The Commission's Housing and Neighbourhoods Work Group suggested that, in Metro Toronto, affordable housing will have to be developed largely as co-operative and non-profit housing. While the provincial Affordable Housing Policy Statement — which requires that a minimum of 25 per cent of housing in all private development be affordable — will be helpful, the work group suggested that a higher target would be appropriate when public lands are involved. The Commission also notes that many existing neighbourhoods along the waterfront provide higher-than-average components of affordable housing. To retain their affordability, especially as family housing, these stable neighbourhoods must be protected from the escalating land values that accompany redevelopment pressures.

Keeping waterfront recreation affordable is a challenge that can be met, in part, by continuing the general practice of not charging



admission to passive green spaces. Where there is an admission fee to more active facilities and programs, “free days” could be instituted, as is done at such places as the Louvre in Paris. The efforts of Harbourfront to offer affordable programs to families, residents, and tourists are good examples of sensitivity to this principle.

The Commission heard evidence that community-based sailing clubs, such as the member groups of the Outer Harbour Sailing Federation, provide low-cost recreational access for a significant body of users. This approach could be encouraged elsewhere along the waterfront. In addition, the public agencies that act as landlords for these clubs should make every effort to provide secure tenure, and to ensure that rent increases do not jeopardize the affordability of access they provide.

The mix of recreational facilities being provided also greatly affects the affordability of the waterfront. Boat-launch ramps, for

Family fishing, Darlington Provincial Park

example, generally offer more opportunities to lower-income groups than do marina slips. So do waterfront trails, which are free of charge. Even when a trail passes through formal recreation areas, every effort should be made to preserve the concept of its use free of charge.

Attractive

- ~ Design and landscaping should produce distinctive and memorable places along the waterfront.
- ~ Waterfront design should:
 - ~ protect vistas and views of the lake;
 - ~ emphasize sensitive design and massing of buildings;
 - ~ consider the relationship between buildings, open spaces, and the water;

- ~ create desirable microclimates;
- ~ incorporate attractive and useable links;
- ~ use harmonious colours, textures, and materials;
- ~ use natural, as well as manicured, landscape techniques.

Landscape architect Richard Moore urged the Commission to be concerned not just with the quantity of green space along the waterfront, but with its quality:

We think you have to capture the unique qualities of our heritage, our culture, and our landscape and express them through excellent design to create a series of memorable places... Maybe the waterfront is our embassy and maybe because of that it's got to be designed with distinction, and reflect our special qualities as people that live along the waterfront.

Mr. Moore also suggested that the traditional planning of highly manicured parklands needs to be creatively challenged by innovative plans that embrace the concepts of sustainable development and ecological management, rather than using purely ornamental approaches.

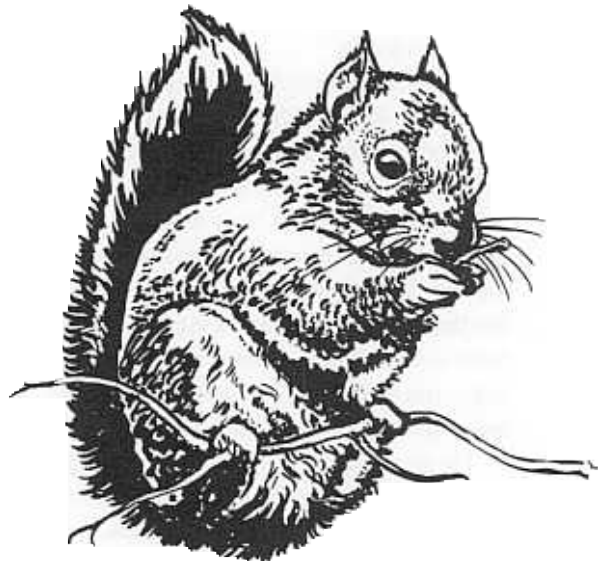
These suggestions were echoed by other deputants, who proposed a "sacred places" policy to preserve areas of outstanding natural or cultural heritage along the waterfront. Developer William Teron, for example, emphasized the potential of a quality waterfront to "uplift the spirit of the entire Metropolitan city and to affect the quality of life and the value of property for all its residents".

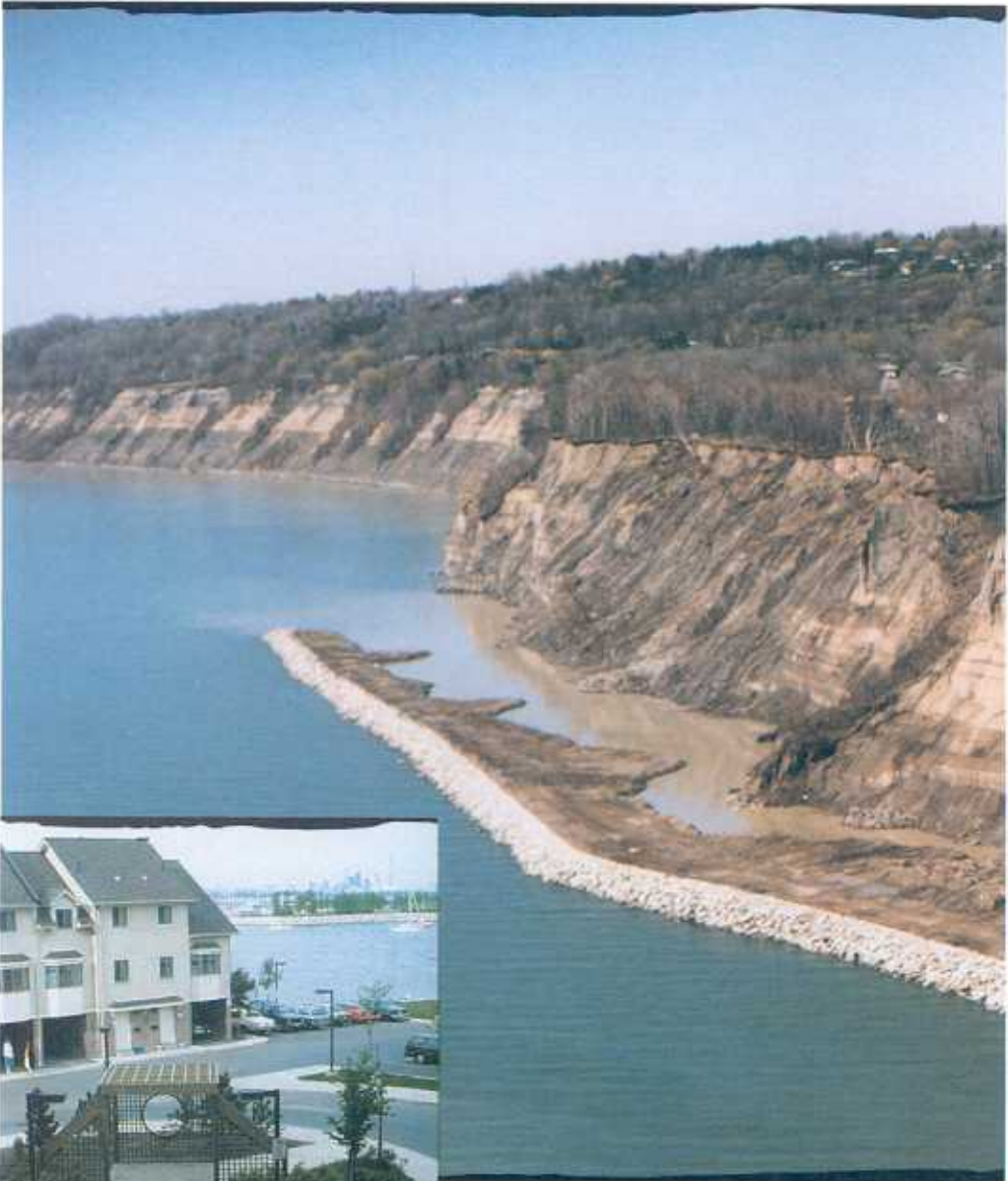
Attractive and appropriate design is particularly important along the water's edge. Inevitably, the width of a public access strip along it will vary according to the nature of adjacent land uses and the feasibility of securing adjacent lands. But it should also be influenced by the nature of public activities and uses expected to take place: generally

speaking, the public shoreline strip should be wider in new developments. In places where existing developments dictate a narrower strip, landscaping should be of a quality and intensity that ensure the strip is useful and attractive to the public.

Householders are also users and polluters: it is not just industry, it is not just big government, it is not just corporations. This is where stewardship and accountability come home in a very direct way. This stewardship and accountability is the very basis to anticipate and prevent environmental problems, and it is the only way that we are going to get away from this react and cure type of problem that has proved so expensive....

Gamble, D. 23 May 1990. "Presentation to the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront public hearings on environment and health, part II." In *Transcript: public hearings on environment and health, part II*, 112. Toronto: Canada. Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront.





Shoreline protection near South Marine Drive, Scarborough

Mimico Housing Co-operative, Etobicoke

One example presented to the Commission was a proposed mixed-use redevelopment on the East Bayfront by the St. Lawrence Park group. This project would provide a well-designed and attractive linear park along the water's edge, and incorporate both public transit and Martin Goodman Trail links in its design.

The Commission is confident that, by adhering to the principles outlined above, and implementing them in all waterfront plans and developments — including in ways suggested in the following chapter — the waterfront can be restored to ecological health to serve the diverse needs of this and future generations.