

1. INTRODUCTION

The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority initiated the Phase IV - Master Plan for Tommy Thompson Park in February, 1987. Direction for the Master Plan was obtained through the approval by the Authority of the Tommy Thompson Park Concept Plan on January 27, 1987. Authority staff with approval from the Executive Committee retained the consulting team of E.D.A. Collaborative (Walter Kehm), Ecoplans Ltd. (Cam Kitchen) and Al Freedman & Associates to assist in preparing a Master Plan.

On January 14, 1988, a public meeting of the Water and Related Land Management Advisory Board was held at the Medical Sciences Auditorium (University of Toronto) to receive comments on the Master Plan. At its Meeting #9/87 held on January 29, 1988, the Authority approved a Master Plan for Tommy Thompson Park.

On July 4, 1989 the Authority filed the Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan and Environmental Assessment document for approval under the Environmental Assessment Act, with the Minister of the Environment. By the summer of 1991, it was evident that the government review could not be completed, and that an alternative review process would be recommended by the Ministry of the Environment. However, following an informal meeting with the Ministry of the Environment in the fall of 1991, it was the Authority's understanding that the majority of the government comments received did not identify any major deficiencies with the Environmental Assessment document.

In a letter dated November 13, 1991 from Mr. Derek Doyle, Director - Environmental Assessment Branch, Ministry of the Environment, the Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan/Environmental Assessment as submitted July, 1989 was returned to the Authority. The letter requested that the document be refiled for consideration through an expedited government review process after the outstanding issues were resolved. The Ministry of the Environment indicated that rather than preparing an entirely new submission, the Authority could refile the Master Plan accompanied by an addendum outlining the public review process, the revised Master Plan, revised capital costs, and phasing.

Information published in the original Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan/Environmental Assessment submitted to the Ministry of the Environment will not be duplicated in this document. Updated or revised information will be included and the Section numbers found in the Addendum document will be listed for location in the original Master Plan/Environmental Assessment (1989) document.

1.1 The Undertaking

The undertaking for Tommy Thompson Park is a revised Master Plan which incorporates the following components:

- the Master Plan's direction, for the majority of the site designated as the "Natural Area", is based on a natural succession or ecological approach, augmented by minimal intervention and management to achieve:
 - the preservation of significant species such as the Common Tern, Black-crowned Night Heron, and Double-crested Cormorant;
 - the protection of environmentally significant areas realizing their dynamic biological nature over time;
 - the creation of significant marsh/wetland habitat; and
 - surface/site preparation in the "Natural Area" to allow natural succession to achieve a vegetative community over time such as a willow/aspens/cottonwood community given the existing adjacent plant communities.
- an Interpretive Centre including an education program as a focal point for environmental resource programs developed for the school boards and the general public, and a small education/shelter/washroom facility to augment the environmental programs in the natural area;
- a separate major/minor pedestrian path system in excess of 12 km and a separate 7 km bicycle pathway including future linkages to the Martin Goodman Trail;
- private vehicular access to the Interpretive Centre at the base of the park with the provision of 200 public parking spaces at this location;
- the maintenance of the existing Aquatic Park Sailing Club in its present location in Embayment C, with 100 swing moorings and limited on-shore facilities;
- a park transportation unit which is proposed to operate from the Interpretive Centre at the base of the park, subject to review of user demand and operating costs; and
- future extension of Toronto Transit Commission service to Tommy Thompson Park and potentially to the Interpretive Centre.

The proponent is currently the owner of a 247 ha waterlot (see Figure 1.1). Once the Ministry of Natural Resources' lease to the Toronto Harbour Commissioners expires or there is substantial completion of lakefilling and dredgeate disposal, ownership of a further 224 ha waterlot will be transferred to the proponent.

Alternatives to the master plan were evaluated in terms of the three master planning zone

TOMMY THOMPSON PARK



the metropolitan toronto and region conservation authority

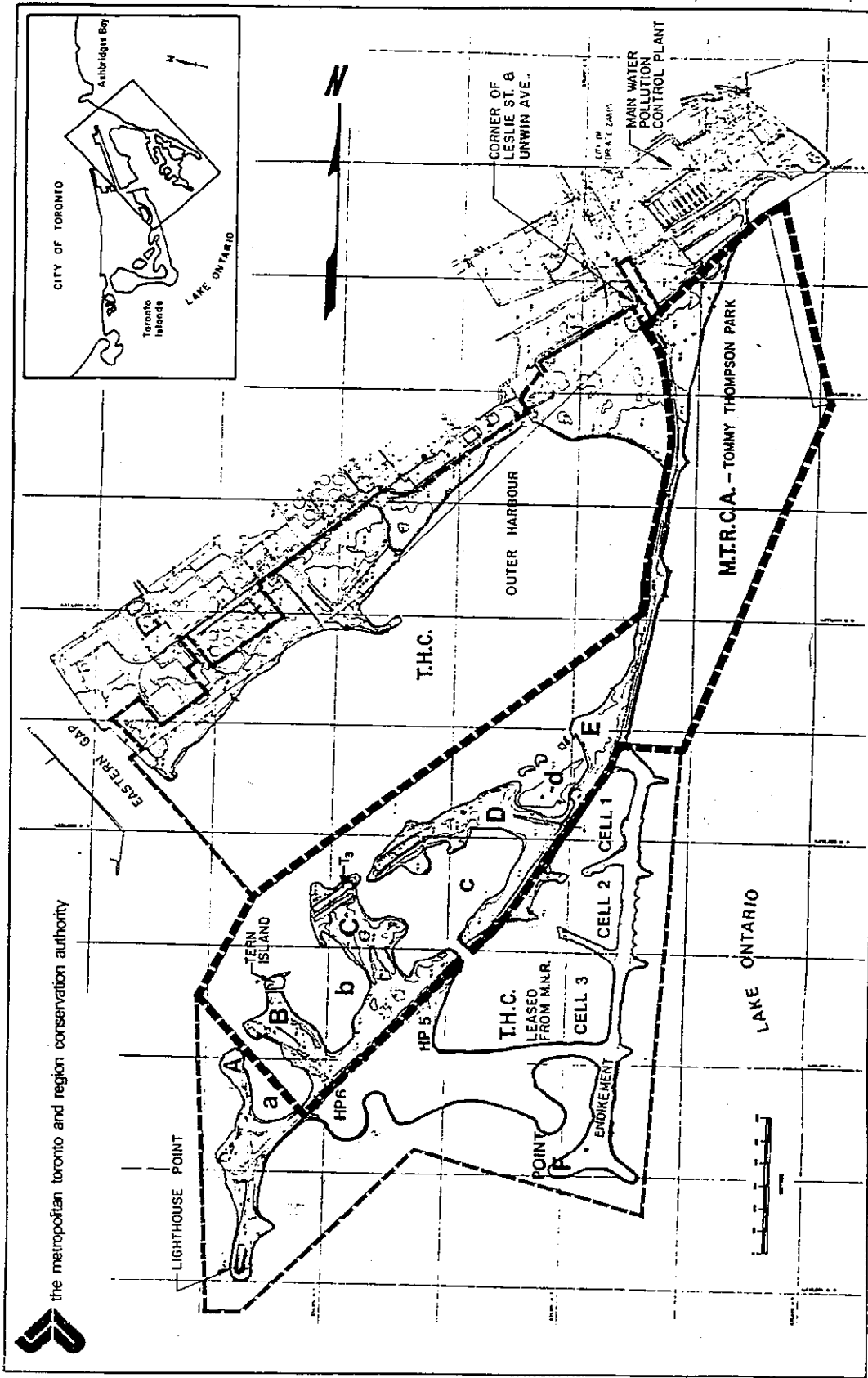


Figure 1.1: Outer Harbour Eastern Headland Land Ownership

options (Phase I) and alternative concept plans (Phase III) including a "do nothing" alternative.

Alternative concepts for Tommy Thompson Park were evaluated in detail. On the basis of the comparison, a revised Concept D was adopted by the Authority as the preferred alternative in terms of its consistency with the goals and objectives, and responsiveness to the public, planning and natural resource concerns.

The master plan incorporates in detail, the revised concept plan components. Furthermore, it elaborates on the primary direction of significant site features protection and the opportunity of environmental enhancement to create a diverse and vibrant ecological unit. Measures to achieve environmental enhancement as well as mitigation and monitoring of the environmental impacts are recommended.

1.2 Description of the Study Area

Planning and Master Plan Areas

In undertaking this study, the Tommy Thompson Planning Area, (Figure 1.2) includes the master plan area and the adjacent land/water area for which future developments will have a bearing on the Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan and ultimate use of the site. This area includes the north shore of the Outer Harbour and the Metropolitan Pollution Control Plant/Coatsworth Cut.

Ownership

Figure 1.1 provides a summary of the waterlot transactions between the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Toronto Harbour Commissioners, and the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The transactions included the following:

- An area under lease from the Ministry of Natural Resources to the Toronto Harbour Commissioners for: (a) completion and maintenance of the shoreline alignment and final armouring, and (b) constructing, operating and maintaining an endikement area for disposal of dredgeate. The term of the lease is for 10 years from May 1983 with a further 10 year renewal option.
- An area transferred from the Ministry of Natural Resources to the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (effective date - May, 1984).
- An area known as the Outer Harbour transferred from the Ministry of Natural Resources to the Toronto Harbour Commissioners (May, 1984).

- The transfer of a small parcel of land to the City of Toronto from the THC to allow for the extension of Leslie Street south Unwin Avenue to the MTRCA property boundary as public road allowance.

Site Context

In 1959, filling to construct the Leslie Street Spit or Outer Harbour East Headland (Tommy Thompson Park) was initiated by the Toronto Harbour Commissioners in the area of Leslie Street and Unwin Avenue.

The opportunity to dramatically increase the land base of Tommy Thompson Park developed in 1973 with the commencement of dredging for the shipping channel in the Outer Harbour. Over the period of 1974 to 1983, approximately 6,500,000 cubic metres of sand/silt were dredged from the Outer Harbour and placed in the lee of the Headland. The placement of sand resulted in the formation of the lagoons and sand spits which account for a significant proportion of the land base of Tommy Thompson Park.

In 1979, the next major expansion of land area commenced with the construction of an endikement on the lakeward side of the Headland. The endikement provides protected cells for dredged material from the Inner Harbour and the Keating Channel.

Tommy Thompson Park, previously referred to as Aquatic Park, is also known as the Leslie Street Spit and the Eastern Headland. In 1985, the park was officially named after the former Metropolitan Toronto Parks Commissioner - Tommy Thompson, who was well known for his phrase "please walk on the grass".

Today, Tommy Thompson Park extends in a southerly direction some 2.0 km from Leslie Street/Unwin Avenue to the endikement area. The main spine of Tommy Thompson Park then continues in a south-westerly direction another 3.0 km to the lighthouse. The endikement extends in a southerly direction 1.8 km from the main spine.

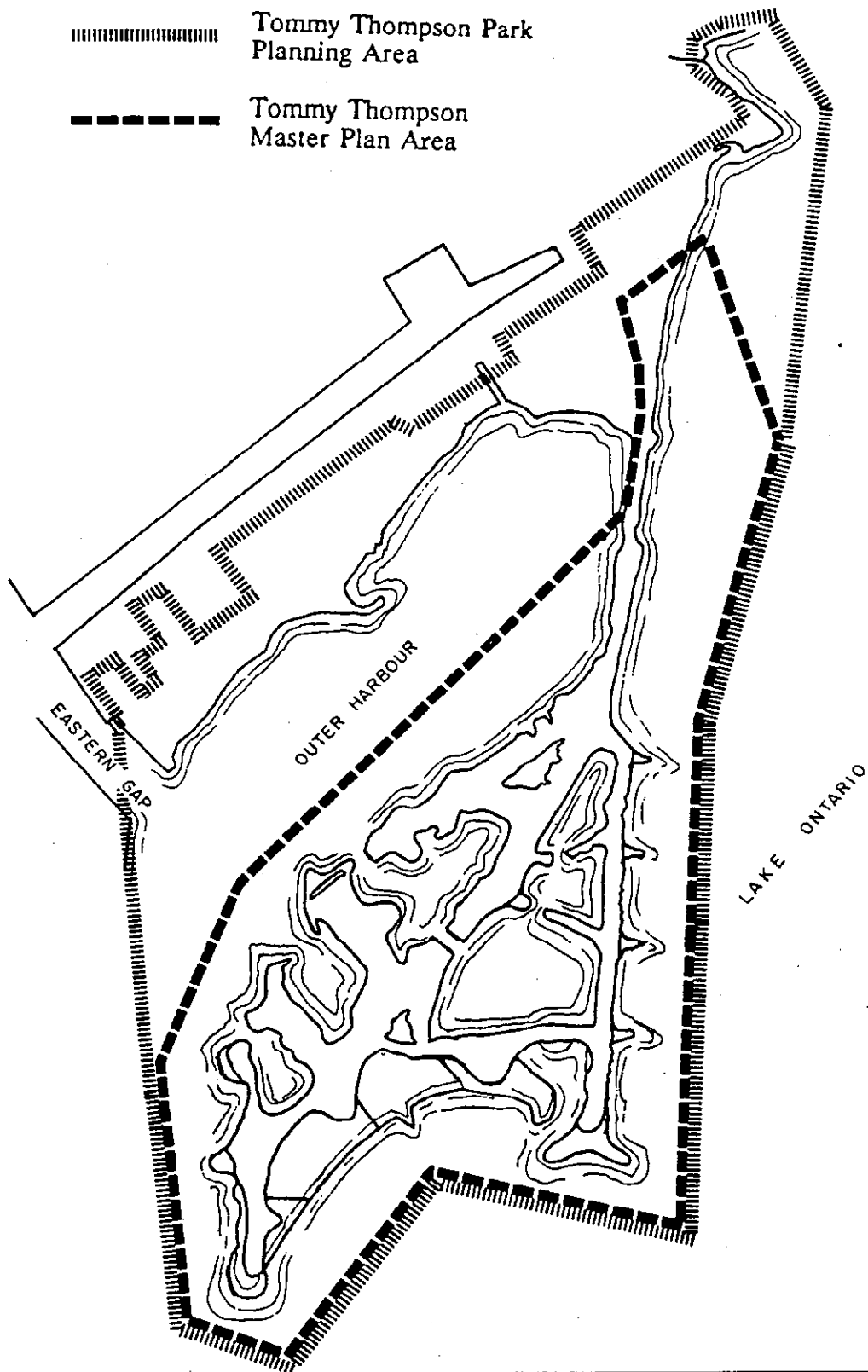
Table 1.1 indicates the current lands and water areas associated with Tommy Thompson Park. Refer to Figure 1.2, for the location of the embayments and cells.

The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority currently owns the land and water bodies included in Tommy Thompson Park. Those areas still under construction are owned by the Ministry of Natural Resources and are leased to the Toronto Harbour Commissioners. The Ministry of Natural Resources indicated the intent to transfer a further 224 ha of land to the MTRCA. The MTRCA is currently responsible for the Interim Management Program which includes both biological and human interest activities.

Table 1.1

Tommy Thompson Park Land/Water Areas

<u>Present Land Area</u>	<u>Master Plan/E.A.</u>		<u>Dec 1991</u>	
	<u>Hectares</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Hectares</u>	<u>Acres</u>
● Outer Harbour Headland	108.0	226.2	130.04	321.32
● Endikement	<u>16.5</u>	<u>41.3</u>	<u>19.98</u>	<u>49.37</u>
Present Area Total	<u>124.5</u>	<u>307.5</u>	<u>150.02</u>	<u>370.69</u>
 <u>Water Area</u>				
● Cell 1	8.2	20.5	8.2	20.5
● Cell 2	9.3	23.3	9.3	23.3
● Cell 3	32.1	80.2	32.1	80.2
● Embayment A	7.0	17.5	7.0	17.5
● Embayment B	11.3	28.3	11.3	28.3
● Embayment C	21.3	53.3	21.3	53.3
● Embayment D	<u>6.4</u>	<u>16.0</u>	<u>6.4</u>	<u>16.0</u>
Water Area Total	<u>95.6</u>	<u>239.1</u>	<u>95.6</u>	<u>239.1</u>
● Proposed Land Area	40.1	100.4	20.0	49.4
● MTRCA waterlot total area	247.27	611.0	247.27	611.0
● THC waterlot under lease from MNR	223.85	553.13	223.85	553.13
● THC Outer Harbour	219.3	541.89	219.30	541.89



1.3 Purpose and Rationale for the Undertaking

By the early 1970's, it was determined that the Outer Harbour Headland, under construction since 1959, was not required for "port related facilities". In August 1973, the Provincial Cabinet gave the Authority "the responsibility of being the Province's agent with regard to the proposed Aquatic Park (now Tommy Thompson Park) and the preparation of a master plan". In 1977, the Authority's mandate was expanded to include not only the preparation of a master plan, but also the development and interim management.

The purpose of the undertaking is to ensure, as stated in the Lake Ontario Waterfront Development Program:

- i) the protection and enhancement of environmentally significant areas, heritage resources, and wildlife and fisheries habitat;
- ii) the provision of regional access and facilities for water-oriented recreation;
- iii) the linkage of specific areas both along the shoreline and within valleyland open space corridors; and
- iv) consultation with the relevant funding and approval agencies and with public interest groups.

(MTRCA, 1986).

In accordance with the mandate of the Authority within the Lake Ontario Waterfront Development Program, the opportunities for the waterfront area, and the diverse interests of the public, interest groups and agencies, the specific goals of the undertaking are as follows:

- **To conserve and manage the natural resources and environmentally significant areas of the site.**
- **To provide a unique, water-oriented open space which will assist in meeting regional needs.**
- **To develop public awareness regarding the significance of the Lake Ontario waterfront and in particular, Tommy Thompson Park.**
- **To develop a plan for Tommy Thompson Park which is cognizant of the policies and development proposals within the planning area.**

The Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan and Environmental Assessment demonstrates:

- Consistency with the goals and objectives (see Section 5.1 of the 1989 document) for Tommy Thompson Park;

- Majority agreement from the Natural Area Advisory Committee on environmental enhancement, through the concept of natural succession aided by surficial soil preparation, and the creation of significant wetland/marsh habitat to replace the habitat lost in the lower Don River at the turn of the century as well as in other river mouth areas along the Metropolitan Toronto waterfront;
- Improvements to the public's use and access while limiting private vehicular access, and the opportunity to enjoy Tommy Thompson Park and its unique waterfront characteristics;
- Recognition of the Outer Harbour's regional significance in providing a protected water area for recreational boating in the form of community clubs and other water-based activities (eg. boardsailing) through the City of Toronto's commitment to the long term operations of the community clubs in the northern part of the Outer Harbour; and
- Consistency with the "Official Plan for the Urban Structure" - Metropolitan Toronto and the Central Waterfront Plan" - City of Toronto Official Plan.