Bidding for the Future: Toronto’s 2008 Olympic bid and the
Regulation of Waterfront land

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Abstract

This research examines the process by which rights to public resources, including public land, were negotiated during the Olympic bidding process in one modern western city. Toronto’s 2008 Olympic bid involved not only the framing of an important public symbol but also the shaping of symbolically significant space, the city’s waterfront. Toronto’s waterfront has always reflected a negotiation between large institutional interests and the voice of the local citizenry. The nature of this space and the implied right of the public to define and use this space has made the representation of urban public interest a matter of crucial significance. To examine the relationships between sport, space and symbols during the bidding process for the Olympic Games is to expose an ongoing ideological battle over the ownership of public land. When the development of a particular parcel of public land is said to be in the public interest, it suggests that city residents from a wide variety of publics have collaborated and developed a shared and agreed upon position about how that development should proceed. The process of adjudication that serves to legitimate the production of space and symbols is important because it has crucial implications for the production of urban order. This research demonstrates that the Olympic bidding process can be understood as a moment that fosters an articulation of social and cultural claims, that offers an opportunity for masses of citizens to mobilize, and that facilitates visions of progress. On the other hand, it can also be the occasion for the defeat of public interest.
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I have always thought that deciding to write a dissertation is one of the most selfish decisions someone can make. I believe this not simply because it requires that numerous individuals have to act selflessly to help you get done, but because the principal researcher often fails to consult these same individuals ahead of time to assess their willingness to be accomplices.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

This dissertation is concerned with the idea and practice of public space in Toronto. Specifically, I investigate the politicization of urban waterfront space in Toronto through the city’s bid for the 2008 Olympic Games. Why the Olympic Games? This dissertation argues that the use of the Olympic symbol to reconfigure urban public space involves the representation of public interest and the framing of public space. Toronto’s waterfront has long been a site of social struggle where diverse interests have voiced opinions, negotiated rights and have placed demands using a variety of strategies, all in an attempt to lay claim to this space. The city’s bid for the 2008 Olympic Games marked a significant episode that stimulated a negotiation between large institutional interests and the local citizenry.

Very seldom have geographers reflected on the spatial questions created by the production of sport and sporting practice. This research seeks to enrich this understanding through investigating the intersections of public space, sporting culture, Olympic dreams and entrepreneurial urbanism. Defining the social utility of sport and addressing the symbolic value of the Olympic Games generates critical questions concerning the politics of space. I argue that the relationships between sport, space and symbols during the Olympic bidding process created the opportunity for public discourse regarding the production of urban public space.
The dissertation is divided into two parts. Part I, consisting of Chapters One through Six, investigates the power of symbols, the shifting meanings of the words public and public space, and the cultural valence of sport.

Chapter Two lays out a rationale for why geographers should be interested in the symbolic economy. Beginning with an examination of the importance of symbols in the work of Sanford Levinson and Walter Lippmann and tracing the power of symbols to aid urban regeneration, we find that a symbol can be “both a mechanism of solidarity, and mechanism of exploitation” (Lippmann 1977[1922], 151).

Working with the idea that the production and framing of symbols are not politically neutral exercises, we find that those who earn the power to shape symbols can become powerful spatial claimants. The legitimacy of spatial claims has much to do with the identity of the claimants, the content of the claims, and the method by which the claims are expressed. This understanding supports the claim, offered in Chapter Three, that “[w]hat is recognized in public space is the legitimacy of debate” (Deutsche 1992, 51). Following the work of Jurgen Habermas and Hannah Arendt, Chapter Three stresses the importance of communication, deliberation and ‘spaces of appearance’ to the functioning of the public sphere. Relying on the work of several geographers, including Peter Goheen and Don Mitchell, we find that the process of defining public space is an intensely political affair that compels us to consider access, ownership, and use (Goheen 1996) as well as issues of design, dispossession and dissent (Mitchell, D. 2003). Thinking about public space as a space of deliberation is a demanding proposition because it requires us to think about space as being more than an actual physical terrain. The goal of
the chapter is to help readers recognize that “[p]ublic space is made, not born” (Acconci 1990).

In Chapter Four, I shift to a discussion of sport as a means to explore the erosion of boundaries between public and private life. In this chapter I argue that sport has provided an excellent opportunity for people to practice politics. Sport assists many citizens to deliberate and to assert their “right to the city” (Lefebvre 1996[1968])). Investigating how sporting culture in Toronto reflects a rich brew of emulation and invented tradition, I show at the turn of the twentieth century, that Toronto’s middle class asserted its moral authority by connecting the principles of “Muscular Christianity” to urban reform. The resurrection of the Olympic Games, discussed in Chapter Five, allowed Toronto’s middle class to reassert its style of moral entrepreneurship and its attempt to produce urban order. As the most publicly recognized symbol in the world, the Olympic Games have been cleverly produced. I trace the roots of this creative process and examine how the Olympic symbol has been used as a means to cultivate particular values and to support an international sporting monoculture that has considerable implications for local everyday life.

In Chapters Five and Six I demonstrate that the perceived neutrality of sport has allowed large scale institutions, both public and private, to seize upon the malleability of the Olympic symbol to embark on complex redevelopment initiatives. As one of the pre-eminent symbols of the symbolic economy, the Olympics have become a highly sought after mega-event because of their ability to transform urban space. The extremely competitive nature of the Olympic bidding process, however, has often required the creation of symbolic consensus through symbolic manipulation. The transformations to
urban space caused by hosting the Olympic Games have often resulted in a process of public disenfranchisement and of increased privatization of decision-making.

In Part II, Chapters Seven through Ten, I link the subjects of Part I, symbols, space and sport, to the process of negotiating Toronto’s urban public space. At issue is how the Olympic symbol became the occasion to re-imagine Toronto’s waterfront. Integral to this story is the performance of a number of key political institutions (i.e. the local bid committee, the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC), the International Olympic Committee (IOC), various levels of government and numerous interest groups). Central to the investigation is a consideration of how Toronto’s Olympic bid reflected the embedded conflict between public and private interests.

These four chapters rely heavily on the reports of the leading popular press. I deliberately trace the evolution of Toronto’s bid through newspaper accounts because the daily newspapers represented the most accessible source of information concerning the bid team’s activities. The critical reader will realize, as Alastair Hannay (2005, 52) has, that “[o]ur newspapers speak to us as much of public opinion as they do of the public whose opinion it supposedly is.” While I do not deny the significance of Hannay’s—and Habermas’s—criticism of the press, we must acknowledge that, for many, the newspaper provided the only source of information about the bid and as such it was the principal medium in generating and recording debate. The newspaper accounts are supplemented by a number of primary documents including information gained from a Freedom of Information Request (City of Toronto Access Request Number 04-1909), Toronto City Council minutes, bid books produced for the International Olympic Committee. In
addition, I rely on a set of interviews with officials concerned and affiliated with the bidding process to help explain motive and method.

The process of Olympic bidding can be divided into three phases: (1) the formation of a local bid group and approval of the National Olympic Committee (i.e. COA); (2) the lobbying of the International Olympic Committee; and finally if the bid is successful (3) the formation of an organizing committee and the staging of the Games. Since Toronto failed to secure the Olympic Games, Chapters Seven, Nine and Ten concentrate on the first two phases. In Chapter Seven we examine the process through which Toronto’s 2008 Olympic bid entered into public consciousness and how it came to be a waterfront bid.

In Chapter Eight I demonstrate why the Olympic waterfront plan was destined to be contentious by providing a historical overview of Toronto’s waterfront with an emphasis on those periods where privatization and bureaucratic decision-making have challenged the public meaning and status of this land. From railway lines to condominiums, from an expressway to empty fields, Toronto’s waterfront reveals a legacy of mismanagement and abuse. The built architecture, or lack thereof, provides a visible reminder of a process. Toronto’s waterfront land is an important resource because of its high symbolic value and because of the citizen’s sense of entitlement. Various interest groups in the city believe that they can define the terms of use of this land and that they have a right to participate in the process through which its social meaning and value are struggled over and confirmed. The continued claimed to this space by multiple publics has arguably made it the city’s most important public space.
In the Chapters Nine and Ten, I examine the struggle for control over the appropriate meanings of the Olympic symbol and waterfront space during the bidding process. What follows is a unique story that involves the efforts of a popular former mayor, a presiding mayor and Council dedicated to boosterism, a series of powerful entrepreneurs, a challenging set of local conditions, and the recognition that the International Olympic Committee’s decision is final. The heated negotiation over the role and malleability of the Olympic symbol and the value of public space is uncovered in this chapter. Just how this space should be conceptualized and valued has sparked lively commentary from different individuals and groups, some for the very first time.

A conversation about the future of Toronto’s waterfront is a point of contact that allows us to investigate the nuanced understandings of the word public. The Olympic bid is as much about the production of images and ideas as it is about new infrastructure. The making of Toronto’s waterfront is not some trivial matter for the process serves to inscribe values and legitimate influence. The negotiation of Toronto’s public waterfront space during the Olympic bidding process puts sociability into contact with regulation, an intermingling that has much to say about urban culture in this modern western city.
Chapter 2. The Production and Power of Symbols

In a tightly written book entitled *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies* (1998), Sanford Levinson notes that we live by symbols. Looking particularly at the contested meaning of Civil War monuments and other Confederate symbols (i.e. the Confederate flag) in Washington, D.C., Levinson illustrates that not only do the meanings of symbols shift over time but their interpretation is inconsistent amongst diverse publics. Do Confederate monuments celebrate slavery and racial injustice? Does it matter where monuments are located? What does the Confederate flag signify? By tracing the heated debates that are stimulated by these questions Levinson demonstrates that the meaning of these symbols is “essentially contested” with multiple publics seeking to control and interpret their meaning. It is perhaps naive, he argues, to think that a collective consensus can be established regarding such politically charged symbols. He claims:

> It is therefore, no small matter whether these publics can indeed agree on some common civil rites and symbols or whether we are indeed doomed to an ever-more-fractionated discourse about the most basic use of public space and the construction of a public narrative. (Levinson 1998, 130-131)
This position resonates soundly with the argument presented by Walter Lippmann in his influential examination of the formation and force of public opinion and the role of symbols. For Lippmann (1997 [1922], 8), symbols are an “important part of the machinery of human communication.” When outlining the utility of symbols Lippmann (1997[1922], 141) warns that “it is tempting to treat them as if they possessed independent energy.” Symbols have no power, argues Lippmann (1997 [1922]), beyond that which is ascribed to them by the human mind. At times the consequences of placing faith in symbols can be devastating. There is perhaps no greater example of this than Lippmann’s use of the lag between the announcement of the end of World War I and the death of numerous individuals still fighting some two weeks later having not received word that surrender had been negotiated. Lippmann uses the tragedy to demonstrate how the “pictures in our head” can be fabricated and manipulated, and led even his most vocal opponent, John Dewey, to describe Public Opinion (1997[1922]) as “the most effective indictment of democracy as currently conceived ever penned” (Dewey quoted in Blum, 1984, 84).

Levinson’s point that “we live by symbols” and Lippmann’s outlining of the framing potential of symbols triggers a deeper geographical challenge. Both authors indicate that debates over the cultural meaning of public symbols are crucial in the production of representations that govern our everyday lives. Their work forces us to move beyond the notion that a geographical landscape is a material thing and contemplate how space simultaneously constitutes and informs social process. The names Richard Wohl, Anselm Strauss, Victor Turner or Walter Firey are likely not very familiar to young geographers, which is unfortunate because their work provides numerous clues
with respect to how to make sense of the urban environment. In this chapter I draw upon their contributions to help aid our understanding of how symbols can be used as vehicles for the transmittal of cultural meaning.

Walter Firey’s examination of land use in Boston was one of the first studies to reveal the power of sentiment and symbolism in urban spatial structure. His book, *Land Use in Central Boston* (1968 [1947]), was a critique of the Chicago School of Sociology’s emphasis on ecological determinism. Using the Boston based examples of Beacon Hill, the Boston Common and the North End, Firey (1945, 141) argues that certain spaces can become the repository for cultural values and as such can “defy a strictly economic analysis.” Drawing on the work of Talcott Parsons and Emile Durkheim, Firey (1968, 140) demonstrates that the link between emotions and a spatial area requires that meanings become fixed upon symbols that accommodate “communication between agents.” For example, he noted that it is “the dynamic force of spatially referred sentiments, rather than considerations of rent, which explains why certain families have chosen to live on Beacon Hill” (Firey 1945, 144). In rejecting the ecological model that was in vogue, Firey helped trigger a new wave of scholarship that accounted for how space both reflects and influences social values. What intrigued Firey was how frequently symbols come to mask the conditions of their own formation. In the case of the Boston Common, Firey explains that the historical events that gave the Common its symbolic character (Cornwallis’ surrender, British evacuation) have dissipated, giving way to newer sentiments concerning social systems (nation, city) or cultural systems (principles, ideals, moral forces). The attachment of values concerning nationhood or civic history to space – to a specific site – is crucial in the formation of
group solidarity and for maintaining the social system. Such is the “functional significance of spatial symbols” according to Firey (1968, 143). Once linked to the social system, Firey contends that the symbol then performs another integrative purpose connecting individuals to wider cultural systems. More fully, Firey (1968, 144) explains:

symbols have a genuine functional significance for the values, moral and otherwise, which make up a cultural system. Spatial areas like the Boston Common are no exception to the rule. By means of the Common certain values, comprising altogether a cultural system, are periodically renewed and reinvigorated. This system, to be sure, is but weakly integrated. For some persons the Common signifies the Puritan heritage of New England; for others, the republican form of government; for others, religious freedom, etc. But all of these fuse together in the minds of most persons, so that there is a meaningful integration real enough to make of the whole a cultural system.

Firey’s work was important because it challenged us to think about representations of urban space. While Firey did not pose the question directly, he asked us to consider: How do people make themselves at home in the city?

The psychological demands that the city places on its constituency later became the subject matter for Wohl and Strauss’s (1958) “Symbolic Representation and the Urban Milieu”. Incorporating Robert Park’s argument that “the city is a state of mind,” the authors demonstrate that most individuals recognize that the city is simply too big to be understood in its entirety. The result, they argue, is that city dwellers learn “to accept and appreciate a short hand symbolic characterization of the place” (Wohl and Strauss
1958, 523). In a different article, Strauss (1961) uses the example of the aerial photograph to help reveal the reductive power of the symbol. He explains that even a brief glimpse of an image of New York’s skyline has incredible communicative power. For example, the strategic placing of a few frames of New York City’s skyline at the beginning of a film can help focus the audience’s expectations. This simple example demonstrates how “A symbol has the power to compress complicated meanings into a specific object or behaviour; it serves as a vehicle for a conception” (Rowntree and Conkey 1980, 460).

The problem with symbols, as Wohl and Strauss (1958, 526) make clear, is that they can simplify and “blot out what lies behind [them], in favor of the interpretation presented by the façade itself.” Spatial complexity and social diversity are often masked through the strategic manipulation of symbols. The principle message that Strauss (1961) conveys is that symbols are instruments of expression and must be judged accordingly. Symbols can be manipulated, are sometimes ambiguous, are frequently instruments of control, but, above all else, they are not arbitrary. The creation of public symbols is important then because they act as “common reference points, they allow for the possibility of dialogue between groups within the City” (Borer 2006, 184).

In his penetrating critique about the failings of democracy, Lippmann argued that the dream of an omnicompetent citizen is an abstraction. It was an impossible task, Lippmann argued, for citizens to be versed in all the matters of the day and as such he feels that participatory democracy is unworkable. Given that the masses face tough structural barriers and lack expertise and accurate information, Lippmann contends that they are susceptible to being duped. Drawing on his intimate knowledge of the newspaper
trade, Lippmann clams that the ability of the media to manufacture consent is a clear indication of the public’s disinterest and ineffectiveness. While downplaying the public’s ability to establish opinion, he acknowledges that citizen interest still has to be enlisted. Here Lippmann turns to the power of symbols in the process of galvanizing public support. For Lippmann (1997[1922], 150) “[n]o successful leader has ever been too busy to cultivate the symbols which organize his following.” Symbols he notes are “focal points where differences merged.” In more detail he explains:

Because of its power to siphon emotion out of distinct ideas, the symbol is both a mechanism of solidarity, and a mechanism of exploitation. It enables people to work for a common end, but just because the few who are strategically placed must choose the concrete objectives, the symbol is also an instrument by which a few can fatten on many, deflect criticism, and seduce men into facing agony for objects they do not understand… And so where masses of people must coöperate in an uncertain and eruptive environment, it is usually necessary to secure unity and flexibility without real consent. The symbol does that. It obscures personal intention, neutralizes discrimination, and obfuscates individual purpose. It immobilizes personality, yet at the same time it enormously sharpens the intention of the group and welds that group, as nothing else in a crises can weld it, to purposeful action. It renders the mass mobile, though it immobilizes personality. The symbol is the instrument by which in the short run the mass escapes from its own inertia, the inertia of indecision, or the inertia of headlong movement, and is rendered capable or being led
along the zigzag of a complex situation. (Lippmann 1997[1922], 151, 152-153)

Elsewhere, Lippmann reaffirms the link between cultural elites and symbolic production arguing that, “he who captures the symbols by which the public feeling is for the moment contained, controls by that much the approaches of public policy. And as long as a particular symbol has the power of coalition, ambitious factions will fight for possession” (Lippmann 1997[1922], 133). Anthropologist Victor Turner (1975, 146) captures the framing power that Lippmann uncovers in the following manner:

[i]t does not matter whether the things shared are religious or political symbols (variously described as “dominant,” “master,” “key,” “pivotal,” or “central” symbols); the point is that the person or party who controls the assignment of “meaning” to them can also control the mobilizational efficacy their central cultural position has traditionally assigned to them.

Continuing to cross disciplinary boundaries we can find parallels to Lippman’s and Turner’s arguments in Sharon Zukin’s work concerning the dual production systems of the city. Zukin (1995, 7) connects the power of symbols to urban regeneration by effectively arguing that city building is not simply about the how land, labour, and capital come together, but depends on how “symbolic languages of exclusion and entitlement” are manipulated. Reading Zukin (1995, 7) we find that “the city has always had a symbolic economy.” In her work, two parallel production systems are emphasized: “the production of space, with its synergy of capital investment and cultural meanings, and the production of symbols, which constructs both a currency of commercial exchange and a language of social identity” (Zukin 1995, 23-24). She argues that producers of symbols
can have profound impacts on the spaces of the city and the public culture that is produced and reinforced there. She further points out that “[t]hose who create images stamp a collective identity … By accepting these spaces without questioning their representations of urban life, we risk succumbing to a visually seductive, privatized public culture” (Zukin 1995, 3). At the same time, Zukin (1995, 292) informs us that while we should recognize that producers of symbols are powerful actors she argues that it is the “framers” of symbols who have more power and greater control.

Zukin’s (1995) emphasis on the symbolic economy allows her to address different understandings of culture and to interrogate the creation of place meanings. To consider the question of ‘whose city?’ requires an assessment of “who has a right to inhabit the dominant image of the city” as well as an examination of “a politics of occupation” (Zukin 1996, 43). While Zukin (1995, 265) maintains that “no single vision mobilizes this symbolic economy” she does suggest that a distinct blend of entrepreneurial capital and cultural symbols has flourished in recent decades.

The cultural cocktail of festival marketplaces, stadium development, convention centres, entertainment centers, tourist zones, museums and art galleries, and world expos has been stimulated by “place entrepreneurs”¹ (especially those in the real estate sector) as well as the resurgence of traditional municipal and business boosterism. The growing influence of the symbolic economy has mirrored the long term processes of suburbanization and the “expansion of abstract financial speculation” and has been fueled by mass immigration, cultural consumption and the marketing of identity politics (Zukin 1995). Others authors have argued that “this new emphasis on image and cultural

¹ Zukin borrows the term ‘place entrepreneurs’ from Harvey Molotch (1976) and his concept of the growth machine. The growth machine thesis addresses the economy of place by suggesting that entrepreneurial activity has always been a critical force in the shaping of urban systems (Logan and Molotch 1987).
representation marks the period of urban development since the late 1980s as unique” (Salmon 2000, 107). David Harvey (1989; 1996; 2000) has broadly summarized the shift as a move from managerialism to entrepreneurialism and he argues that the pressure to produce a more competitive urban environment has forced numerous cities to attempt to lure financial, consumption and entertainment resources. To gain a competitive edge in an unsettled time of economic, social and environmental need, Zukin (1995, 2) claims that “culture is more and more the business of cities.” For example, public space reconfigured by public investment in cultural amenities is often viewed as a marker of urbanity (Mitchell & Staeheli 2006). The symptoms of urban decline (white flight, suburbanization, gentrification, labour market reconfiguration) are being combated with projects that emphasize the twin forces of sociability and spectacle (Mitchell & Staeheli 2006; Harvey 1990; Sorkin 1992; Knox 1993).

As the following chapters will illustrate, the Olympic Games are perhaps the pre-eminent example of this newly fashioned symbolic economy. For now it is sufficient to note that many recognize the Olympics to be “one of the most visible and spectacular examples of a public cultural event in modern societies” (Essex and Chalkley 2004, 203). For geographers Stephen Essex and Brian Chalkley “the growth of the Games as an international spectacle has offered its hosts increasing opportunities to capture what Bourdieu (1984) has called ‘symbolic capital’, namely a collection of physical attributes and images which attest to its distinction, taste and eminence” (Essex & Chalkley 1998, 201). International Olympic Committee member, Richard Pound, has glowingly reported that:
The Olympics, as an ongoing movement ... has the highest recognition factor of any organization in the world... We did a test in nine countries on five continents. It’s more recognized than the Red Cross, the United Nations, Coca-Cola, and McDonald’s. It’s the most recognized symbol in the whole world. (Pound 1998)

Numerous sport historians have illustrated that nearly everyone can recall a particularly defining Olympic moment. For me, it was Ben Johnson’s thrilling defeat of Carl Lewis in the 100m sprint at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, South Korea. I can remember cheering him on with my nose pressed against the television screen for those magical ten seconds in September. On that day, I joined many Canadians, all of us collectively holding our breath as a man ran a race that might be defined in one word: perfection. I can remember my bitter disappointment when he was stripped of his gold medal just a few days later having testing for a banned substance. Without question Ben Johnson became the target of a series of frustrations that stretched well beyond the issue of doping in sport.²

For sociologist Michael Schudson (1989) the ability to recall or “retrieve” such moments are crucially important in determining the potency of certain cultural objects. For Schudson (1989) the power of a symbol rests not only on its retrievability, but also on its rhetorical force, resonance, institutional retention, and resolution. Our ability to recall particular Olympics events, locations, individuals and years enables us to converse about their importance. Firmly rooted in public memory, the Olympic Games serve to link athletic achievement to historical and spatial development. The significance of the

² While Ben Johnson’s story will likely forever be thought of as paving the way for greater doping controls in sport, I still reflect on his performance with utter amazement. I certainly do not discredit the positive effects of performance-enhancing drugs but nevertheless I remained awed by his performance for other reasons. The ability to harness all of one’s energy and emotion and to release it a precise moment in time is truly a special achievement.
“Nazi-Olympics” in Berlin 1936, the black-power salute at Mexico City 1968, the massacre at Munich in 1972, and the boycotts of the 1980s all serve to illustrate that the Olympics have been politically charged. The instant celebrity status of the Jamaican bobsled team at Calgary’s 1988 Olympics might trigger an entirely different set of academic and emotional responses ranging from the idea that being exceptional is not solely achieved through winning, to the problematic nature of structural adjustment programs. The media has certainly added to the rhetorical force of the Olympics making athletes household names and putting cities on our geographic radars. How many Canadians could claim to be familiar with Lillehammer prior to the 1994 Winter Games? Would an international audience know of Calgary prior to 1988? Alternatively we might ask: How many kids wore Team Canada hockey jerseys during the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics? In Canada, a national hosting program, the channeling of sport funding, a national education policy and a selection of celebrated stories helps to insure that the Olympics have “institutional retention”.

Much of the research on the Olympic Games has concentrated on tracing their impact on economic (capitalist/corporatist) restructuring and redevelopment. For example, the Olympic Games have been connected to issues such job creation, media expansionism, corporate sponsorship, facility and infrastructure improvements, inter-city competition, the growth in entrepreneurialism by city governments, and their influence on tourism planning (Burbank et al. 2000; Dolores et al. 2000; Essex & Chalkley 1999; French & Disher 1997; Hiller 2000; Rutheiser 1996; Waitt 1999; Whitelegg 2000). Paraphrasing Hall (1996), Hiller & Moylan (1999, 48) describe mega-events such as the Olympics as “high profile, one time events of limited duration, that require fixed-date
planning, massive expenditures and infrastructural improvements.” From this perspective, the Olympic Games are often viewed as “catalysts of urban change” (Essex & Chalkley 1998), spectacle (Ley & Olds 1988; Tomlinson 1996; Waitt 1999), a panacea (Whitelegg 2000), or more colourfully as a “grandiose celebration of the commodity form and the triumph of the free market” (Rutheiser 1996, 6).

The strength of much of the urban literature on the Olympics remains linked to its effective demonstration of the economic dimension to culture outlined by Zukin above. While many articles recognized the Olympic Games to be a powerful symbol that can aid a city’s regeneration efforts, it is unfortunate to note that the Games are often treated as though they possess an independent energy. The result is that much of the writing on the Olympics from a geographical perspective focuses on the product not on process. The purpose of the present research is to demonstrate that while the Olympics are a powerful symbol that do have the ability to condense meaning, they remain malleable to the framing efforts of dedicated publics. By linking the production of the Olympic symbol to the production of Toronto’s waterfront I demonstrate that Toronto’s active involvement in the process of Olympic bidding provides the occasion where interested parties are encouraged to articulate the meanings that they attached to urban public space, and to do so with the knowledge of the diversity of values which are competing for recognition and legitimacy. Bidding for the Olympic Games is a time when local policy making is influenced by extra local forces, when ideologies are questioned, when image creation goes into high gear, and when the connection of ordinary citizens to the city building process can be scrutinized. It is a time when land use can be contested and when particular representations of urban space strive for legitimacy. An Olympic bid can be
understood as an event that fosters an articulation of social and cultural claims, that can offer an opportunity for masses of citizens to mobilize and that can facilitate visions of progress. On the other hand, it can also be the occasion for the defeat of public interest.

If we believe Zukin (1995, 259) when she writes that public spaces “are an important means of framing a vision of social life in the city” then it is imperative that we strive to discover the nature of the publics that contend for influence and to identify values they invest in significant public space in the contemporary western city. The framing of the Olympic symbol is not some trivial matter because those who are able to lay claim to it gain the luxury of temporarily ascribing symbolic meaning to space. This is no small accomplishment in the production and maintenance of urban order. To play a role in defining the public is to be attached to the social invention of urban space and culture.
Chapter 3. Rethinking the meaning of the public for geographic study

In the last chapter we found that while symbols are imagined entities, they have real consequences. The spatial implications attached to the production of symbols place an enormous responsibility on an urban citizenry who have the job of examining intentions and defending interests. This is no trivial task because, as Kathryne Mitchell (2000, 46) puts it, “[t]he right to define and represent public space and culture and the culture of public space is considered important by so many diverse actors because it is also fundamentally about the right to define society and its collective identity.” Examining who represents public interest and whose space is public space remains a critical task if we are to determine who has a “right to the city” (Lefebvre 1996[1968]; Mitchell, K. 2000).

This chapter investigates the shifting meanings of the word public. I begin with Hannah Arendt’s and Jurgen Habermas’s examinations of the public sphere to provide some historical moorings as well as to explain why the terms public and private remain crucial to our understandings of social order and social change. The infiltration of private
concerns and the problem of multiple voices in the public sphere are two points under consideration. For urbanists, the messiness of permeable spheres raises legitimate questions about: whose public or which public is at risk, under attack, or in decline? (Zukin 1991, 1995; Boyer 1993; Sorkin 1992).

After tracing the structural transformation of the public sphere, I move on to consider the Peter Goheen’s (1998) assertion that “[p]olitics is the language of the public sphere”. Recognizing that Habermas does not explicitly outline the physical location of the public sphere, I demonstrate that desire to seek out ‘where’ politics happen has become an increasingly fashionable topic of geographic investigation. At the same time, I aim to show that “[p]eople fight not only over a piece of turf, but about the sort of reality that it constitutes” (Molotch 1993, 888).

To talk about public space is, in my estimation, to participate in a broader discussion concerning the right to own and use space—it is inescapably a discussion about democracy. The ultimate purpose of the chapter is to propose that we cannot begin to address the viability of the public sphere in Toronto if we do not believe it is an ideal that is worth fighting for or think that public space no longer holds valued.

**The Public Sphere**

Jurgen Habermas (1989, 1) writing what has come to be one of the most influential books on the history of the public sphere, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, has noted that while “[t]he usage of the words “public” and “public sphere”” may have become “clouded” and their employment “confused”, their replacement with “more precise terms” is not in question. Numerous authors have lent legitimacy to this claim. For example, Joe Bailey (2000, 384) argues that the “[p]ublic
and private are the common referents to deep and basic domains of social experience.” Nancy Fraser (1992, 131) argues that the words public and private are powerful terms, “frequently deployed to delegitimate some interests, views, and topics and to valorize others … to restrict the universe of legitimate public contestation.” Geographers too, have been compelled to use the word “public” in a meaningful manner. For instance, Katharyne Mitchell (2000) has argued, “[o]ne of the most pressing concerns … is the contemporary loss of both physical and the ideology of “the public”.” In addition, Peter Goheen (1998, 480) has noted that, “[t]he concept of the public as an important force in understanding the modern city appeared at the birth of urban social science itself.”

Without question, coming to grips with the diversity of meanings that the words public and private convey often takes us out of our comfort zones and challenges our disciplinary assumptions. There is a tension that exists about whether we should conceptualize the public sphere as a closely knit whole with an encompassing singleness, or view it as multiple, heterogeneous and lacking completeness. Habermas’s (1989, 3) assertion that “[w]e are dealing here with categories of Greek origin transmitted to us bearing a Roman Stamp” provides some indication of the task that one is confronted with when they go searching for the public. I do not intend to chart the numerous permutations and subtleties that working definitions rely on—a sizable bibliography already exists on this matter. Instead I follow the logic of those authors who view the appropriate meaning of “public” as “essentially contested” (Calhoun 2004) or always a negotiation (Goheen 1993). It is important, however, to briefly sketch the broad transformations of the public sphere because it helps us to understand why these contests remain important. In the next
I rely on two authors, Hannah Arendt and Jurgen Habermas, to frame this discussion.

**Hannah Arendt**

First published in 1958, Hannah Arendt’s *The Human Condition* is a useful book for those seeking confirmation that speaking and acting in public remains important. At the core of *The Human Condition* is an investigation of the meaning of political freedom and political experience. Drawing attention to the ancient Greeks’ sharp distinction between the private (household) and the public (political realm), and demonstrating the steady erosion of this separation with the arrival of the nation-state and technical efficiency, Arendt claims that there has been a decline of the political potential of the public realm. Her central thesis is that the concern for political association has been weakened by a style of social interaction that has seen action replaced by behaviour. To construct her argument she relies on a series of conceptual triads: labour, work, action and the public, the private and the social.

Arendt identifies three activities as being central to the human condition: labour, work and action. Labour, as Arendt explains, is concerned with those activities that are essential to survival or what we might refer to as the supporting of life (eating, sleeping, etc.). To avoid bodily function or species reproduction – to avoid labour – is to commit oneself to death. Thus, Arendt refers to labour as the pain of being alive. As such, Arendt categorizes labour as the least desirable of all activities, in part because there is nothing all that remarkable about it, it is a necessity for all animals.

Work on the other hand, she claims, refers to the desire to make the world distinctly human and is reflected in activities of the artists, architect, builders and
legislators. Work signals difference and reflects individual desires and perceptions. It allows humans to distinguish themselves from other species, to artificially differentiate themselves from nature, to shape the environment to suit the needs of humans. It allows humans to try and create something that will last beyond their individual lifespan. Work signals durability and “provides us with a stage for our actions” (Canovan 1994, 181).

Arendt reserves her highest praise for action, because for her it is the act of disclosing ourselves to others that occurs in public and depends on shared experience and the ability to communicate. Public action, as Arendt explains, is the realm of freedom since it exists outside the performance of the necessary activities that shape private life. Private life, for Arendt necessarily involved deprivation. More fully, she writes,

Compared with the reality which comes from being seen and heard, even the greatest forces of intimate life—the passions of the heart, the thoughts of the mind, the delights of the senses—lead an uncertain, shadowy kind of existence unless and until they are transformed, deprivatized and deindividualized, as it were, into a shape to fit them for public appearance (Arendt 1958, 50).

Arendt (1958, 179) argues that “[i]n acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world.” With action comes the interchange of ideas, the expansion of personality and the doing of great things (Arendt 1958). Action has special meaning because it creates the possibility of institutional arrangements that will outlast the interests of those speaking and “facilitates the mutual recognition of strangers” (Kohn 2004, 203). Presenting oneself
to an audience that comprises only family and friends greatly reduces the plurality of perspectives and situation that for Arendt (1958) constitutes only a limited reality.

To live an entirely private life means above all to be deprived of things essential to a truly human life: to be deprived of the reality that comes from being seen and heard by others, to be deprived of an “objective” relationship with them ... to be deprived of the possibility of achieving something more permanent that life itself. (Arendt 1958, 58)

Acting in public means subjecting one’s self to judgment by others. For Arendt it also required the uncloaking of identity and the sharing of experiences. For this to happen, Arendt argues that action requires both the space of appearance and the world we hold in common (Arendt 1958).

‘Spaces of appearance’ in Arendt’s narrative are neither restricted to particular institutions nor do they occur in specific locales; instead they come into existence whenever and wherever action and speech is put to use for the achievement of collective goals. The fragility of these spaces is recognized by Arendt (178): “[w]herever people gather together, it [the space of appearance] is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever.” Put a touch differently, Arendt was interested in physical locations as she stressed the need for face-to-face communication, but she did not place limits on where such deliberations could or should occur. Or as Benhabib (1992, 93) usefully summarizes, “[i]t [public space] is not a space in any topographical or institutional sense: a town hall or city square where people do not “act in concert” is not a public space in Arendtian sense.” Arendt’s emphasis on a shared space that is produced only temporarily—ceasing to exist when people disperse—is often a struggle for those
who think in terms built form. Consider for example, the following words of artist Vito Acconci (1990, 901):

Public space is an old habit. The words *public space* are deceptive; when I hear the words, when I say the words, I’m forced to have an image of a physical place I can point to and be in. I should be thinking only of a condition; but, instead, I imagine an architectural type, and I think of a piazza, or a town square, or a city commons. Public space, I assume, without thinking about it, is a place where the public gathers. The public gathers in two kinds of spaces. The first is a space that is public, a place where the public gathers because it has a right to the place; the second is a space that is made public, a place where the public gathers precisely because it doesn’t have the right—a place made public by force.

Geographers who are acquainted with the work of Henri Lefebvre’s, *The Production of Space* (1991), would be perhaps more comfortable with Acconci’s struggle. We have come to recognize that space is not something that is simply inherited but must be thought of both as a medium of social relations as well as a material product that can affect social relations. Space is simultaneously material and representational.

While the notion of visibility concerns Arendt, she believes that the second aspect of the public—the public as the common world—is what is really under threat.

The public realm, as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak. What makes mass society so difficult to bear is not the number of people involved, or at least not
primarily, but the fact that the world between them has lost its power to
gather them together, to relate and to separate them. (Arendt 1958, 52-53)

This decline she attributes to the rise of a social realm between the public and the private
spheres. She fears that the rise of a social realm, having filled the public sphere with
issues that were formerly subjects of private worry, has inverted the status of labour,
work and action, privileging the first two at the expense of the latter. Those affairs that
were previously thought to be private are now revealed as though everything is in the
public interest (Bauman 1999). The result has been the transformation of the public realm
from a space of plurality and appearances to into a space of intimacy and conformity. In
the process, Arendt argues, people have lost the experience of politics.

Arendt’s conception of politics is based on the idea of an active citizenship,
characterized both by engagement and collective deliberation. But, as Maurizio Passerin
d’Entrèves (1989, 11) explains, Arendt’s theory of action contains an “unresolved
tension” because it simultaneously promotes both an expressive (agonal) and a
communicative model of the public sphere. It is expressive because it calls for the
individuals to reveal themselves, to perform, in an attempt to draw attention to their
individual uniqueness and “compete for recognition and glory” (d’Entrèves 1989, 11). In
other instances, though, Arendt emphasizes the need for communal deliberation that is
based on cooperation rather than contestation. While Arendt does shift focus between the
expressive and communicative models depending on context, she remains consistent in
arguing that a space of appearance must be produced.

When Arendt refers to the space of appearance, she means the place where
“everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest
possible publicity” (Arendt 1958, 52). Her fear is that with the ascent of the social realm what brings people together is not a pursuit of common interests; rather, it is the quest for sameness or uniformity. She (Arendt 1958, 39) notes: “society always demands that its members act as though they were members of one enormous family which has only one opinion and one interest.” The result is a decaying of citizen spirit and a situation where politics is what other people (i.e. experts) do.

This transformation is taken up and more forcefully argued by Jurgen Habermas.

**Jurgen Habermas**

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), Jurgen Habermas explores two important themes: (1) the origin of the public sphere; and (2) the structural changes to the public sphere. Habermas locates the emergence of his “public sphere” in the eighteenth century west, arguing that the breakdown of religious hegemony and the emergence of a middle class facilitated by the rise of capitalism provided the opportunity for private persons to contemplate the formation of public opinion. For Habermas, the public sphere is a realm that mediates between the larger society and the state. It is a realm that allows the private concerns of family and economic social life to mingle with the concerns and demands of social and public life. In what is perhaps his most frequently quoted statement, Habermas (1989, 27) outlines that the public sphere, may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against public authorities themselves, to engage in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor. The medium of
this political confrontation was particular and without historical precedent: people’s public use of their reason.

In the above quotation, private persons are those whose status emerges from their ownership of property and education. It is these conditions that Habermas suggests allow them to enter into the public realm as private people, to articulate a political public opinion and to “put the state in touch with the needs of society” (Habermas 1989, 31).

What was missing during the Middle Ages, according to Habermas, was a sphere of social action. Previously there was no distinction between public or private spheres, opinion or public opinion. Instead, there was a courtly publicity where royalty presented itself before its subjects. Here, public power neither sought to reflect nor care for public interest. For a new social sphere to emerge, a few transformations had to occur. First, the Reformation produced monumental changes to the church giving rise to a new sense of religious freedom. The resultant condition was that representative power was no longer linked to a divine authority and consequently religion became a private matter, with the church becoming just one of many societal institutions. Second, the emergence of finance and trade capitalism helped to create a public budget, in distinction from private household property of the feudal lord. Here, Habermas explains, monarchial authority released its grip on its ‘holdings’ providing the occasion for new independent institutions of public authority to take shape. With the separation of ruler and state, a new state administration assumed public authority. Habermas makes it clear that the transformation was neither quick nor smooth but assures us that over time display gave way to discourse.

With the pulling of these historical triggers, Habermas claims that “the public” finally gained consciousness of its political potential. It is upon this recognition, along
with the power of rational debate and the formation of public opinion, that Habermas finds the makings of a “bourgeois public sphere”. While Habermas highlights how the public sphere mediates between state and society, he is careful to explain how the bourgeois public sphere remained part of the private realm (see Figure 3.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private Realm</th>
<th>Sphere of Public Authority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil society (realm of commodity exchange &amp; social labor)</td>
<td>State (realm of the “police”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjugal family’s internal space (bourgeois intellectuals)</td>
<td>Court (courty-noble society)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sphere in the political realm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sphere in the world of letters (clubs, press)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(market of culture products) “Town”</td>
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Figure 3.1. Habermas’s Basic Blueprint of the Public and Private Realms (Source: Habermas 1989, 30).

From Figure 3.1 we see a number of distinct divisions. In Habermas’s blueprint we find a double line segregating the state from society because Habermas wanted to clearly demonstrate that the public and private are distinct categories. In Habermas’s blueprint we also find two public spheres: (1) the inauthentic public sphere represented by state authority (which Habermas argues was quite secretive); and (2) the authentic public sphere of private people coming together as a public through the use of their own reason. Habermas (1989, 30) places the authentic public sphere in the private realm because it was a public sphere constituted by private people. He divided the authentic public realm into three sections: (1) the market of culture products; (2) the Republic of Letters; and (3) the public sphere in the political realm. The authentic public sphere in the private realm was further distinguished from the intimate private sphere comprised of family and civil society (which is concerned with the production and exchange of commodities).
The authentic public sphere, then, is crucial for it meshed the roles of individuals as producers and reproducers (linked to the intimate private sphere) with their public roles (as subjects or citizens). But how does Habermas explain the emergence and consolidation of this authentic public sphere?

For Habermas (1989), informed criticism of the state began with the notion that the bourgeois public sphere began as a reading public. It is easy to gloss over this point but the ability to read and write is actually quite important because these skills greatly expanded communicative power of the public sphere. In the absence of television, radios, telephones, internet, and the ability to travel rapidly, Banning (2002, 111) argues that “the eighteenth-century public had to rely on the pen for escape from isolation.” During the course of the eighteenth century, literacy rates in England, France, and Germany shot up. At the same time, major towns were becoming major urban conurbations housing a disproportion of the state’s population and thereby exerting a monumental influence on national culture (Banning 2002).

The urban impact on the public is even more dramatic if we consider the improvements of physical communications that put these urban centers in contact with one another. Through state action such as road building and canal networks, there was a drastic reduction in travel time for individuals, goods and services. The improved infrastructure also facilitated the distribution of letters, books and newspapers. In short, the “improvement in symbolic and physical communication was so marked that people noticed and began to feel that they were part of a larger public” (Banning 2002, 132). For Habermas, then, what began as discussions of literature in German table societies, English coffeehouses, and French salons (and other discursive spaces and sites) soon
came to be political debates on matters that had previously been the concern of the state. The increase of literacy led, in Habermas’s opinion, to a rise in self consciousness and as Banning (2002, 135) summarizes, “[t]he result was the formation of a collective entity which saw itself as “the public”—independent, critical, and the ultimate arbiter of cultural (and perhaps even political) matters.”

Reading Habermas’s account we find that the print media and face-to-face discussion played crucial roles in making common matters the objects of politics. Nancy Fraser (1992, 110-111) provides further insight on this aspect of Habermas’s work commenting that his public sphere “designates a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk … a theater for debating and deliberating rather than for buying and selling.” The formation of a public sphere that emerges in print and in conversation is unique in Habermas’s account because regardless of the size or composition of the publics that gathered in these sites, he argues that they had a number of institutional criteria in common. First, the status of the participants was disregarded in favour of the logic of the better argument. Second, areas of common concern that had formerly been the preserve of the Church and State (i.e. philosophy and culture) became discussion points. Third, the public was inclusive in principle. By incorporating political issues into critical debate, a debate that was premised on social equality and the use of their reason—where the better argument always won the day—the public sphere positioned itself not only against the state but above it as well.

From this perspective, the bourgeois public sphere institutionalized competitive discourse (Calhoun 1992). As Habermas (1989, 37) explains, “[w]herever the public established itself institutionally as a stable group of discussants, it did not equate itself
with the public but at most claimed to act as its mouthpiece, in its name, perhaps even as its educator – the new form of bourgeois representation.” Over time public authority, having been forced to respond to a clearly articulated public opinion, became linked to a system of norms and regulations, which themselves continued to be discussed and debated.

The formation of the bourgeois public realm provided the potential for the democratic control of social and political institutions. For Habermas it was the bourgeoisie who represented the only capable force with suitable resources upon which to challenge the state. Bourgeois confrontation with the state was privileged because individuals within this group could effectively engage in rational communication rendering them fit to formulate a sensible and enforceable public opinion. Peter Goheen (1998, 481, my emphasis) summarizes, “[t]he bourgeoisie alone became an effective interest group possessing the communication skills and manipulating levers of power, thereby exercising power over the institutions of government.” Bourgeois society was the necessary ingredient to the transformation of class domination; the public sphere they created constituted an equally important component of democratic will formation.

For Habermas (1989), the public sphere lost its vibrancy when the state began to play a more fundamental role in the private realm (everyday life) and when private interests took on increasing political roles through the state and the media. The rise of state capitalism, the increase of culture industries, the power wielding of economic corporations, and the infiltration of big business into public life, ultimately changed the public sphere. The ability of citizens to influence decision-making structures was significantly altered in Habermas’s (1989) opinion, with the role of citizens being
narrowed to that of the consumer. He claims, “publicity has been transformed into a principle of managed integration” (Habermas 1989, 207, my emphasis). In this scenario the public sphere as a space of rational discussion gives way to a realm of mass cultural consumption, administered by corporations and dominated by elites. The result is that various goods and services, political administration(s) and spectacle(s) are on offer, but they are not really up for negotiation. The problem for Habermas (1989, 206) is that “[p]ublicity loses its critical function in favor of a staged display; even arguments are transmuted into symbols to which again one cannot respond by arguing but only by identifying with them” (Habermas 1989, 206).

The public sphere further broke down, in Habermas’s (1989) opinion, when it was occupied by people without property. When the bourgeois public sphere became increasingly democratized, its influence declined. Summarizing Habermas’s analysis, Goheen (1998, 487) informs us that,

[t]he public sphere was readily conceptualized so long as it was the arena of influence of a well defined group whose institutions and means of communication were visible and dominant in society. As the control by the bourgeois interests over the city came to be challenged…the public sphere diminished.

Of course, we recognize that Habermas’s ideal public sphere was fictional. The authentic public sphere represented an incomplete public and we would be wise to take heed of the critics who convincingly argue that his theory presents a rather narrow conception of the public sphere. Nancy Fraser (1992, 116, emphasis in original) neatly claims “the bourgeois public was never the public.” We might take note of how Habermas
presupposes a number of critical institutional features of the public sphere. For example, his take on the rise of the bourgeois public sphere is linked to a national state apparatus, and functions according to national economy (territorial based), language, literature, communication infrastructure (i.e. a national press) and so on (Fraser 1992, Eley 1992, Ryan 1992, Howell 1993). The common thread amongst revisionist historiographers looking at Habermas’s work lies in their quest to create a far more inclusive concept of the public sphere which includes women, people of different races, the property-less, and the poor for example. What the alternative histories offer is a sense that “we can no longer assume that the bourgeois conception of the public sphere was simply an unrealized utopian ideal; it was also a masculinist ideological notion that functioned to legitimate an emergent form of class rule” (Fraser 1992, 116).

The idea that a modern public sphere needs to be amended to include more social groups has been recognized by Habermas (1992) as he has conceded the use-value of recognizing multiple public spheres. Yet, his model still serves as an effective starting point when we think about democratic agency. Calhoun (2004) nicely summarizes, “if Habermas does not offer the whole story or the last word on the public he is nonetheless very helpful for clarifying the ‘stakes’ of the concept of public or public sphere.”

**A transformed public sphere**

Attempting to define terms that have been transformed does require a sympathetic readership. What Arendt and Habermas share is the sense of importance that the words public and private maintain even while both of them illustrate that the dividing line between them has become blurred. Reflecting on the work of Habermas and Arendt we find that the public sphere can stretch from the highly abstract to the very particular.
Arendt’s (1958) public sphere emerges anywhere “men act together in concert” while Habermas (1989) goes to great length to demonstrate the specificity of the bourgeois public sphere. Arendt focuses on the spaces of political action, while the political potential of the public sphere in Habermas’s work is linked to communication. One sees value in contestation, performance and plurality; the other stresses the need for consensus based on rational discussion. Arendt argues that our full personalities can only come to fruition in public, while Habermas thinks we enter the public realm as full individuals. Habermas’s public sphere is impersonal. Both of them highlight that the public sphere is distinct from economic markets and state apparatus, yet each shares the idea that the permeability of the public and private spheres has been affected by impersonal administration and mass conformism. The two of them get us thinking about what conditions hinder the effectiveness of modern day publics.

Even from this brief review we see that public representation can be cast in different ways. One can use the notion of the public to imagine a space—public space—to cast visual representations, as expressed by Arendt’s space of appearances (or as other authors define it: the search for the modern agora). Here, the act of being seen and heard—the performance—in public space is extremely important. In turn, Habermas reminds us that we require something more than visual recognition.

Thinking about institutional mechanisms and processes reminds us that access and deliberation are still crucial features to the modern public sphere. Function and location take on different degrees of importance depending on the context. Of course, we also have our own attitudes to consider. I find Habermas’s work particularly appealing because he provides historical grounding. His ideal public sphere is useful in providing a
focal point for our reconstructive efforts—forcing us to answer questions of access, identity, location, difference, and inclusion—in explaining whose ideas are being represented in public opinion. With that in mind, I fully recognize that my own style of deliberating is often far too combative to approximate anything close to Habermas rational consensual model. I am often too passionate to be rational, too arrogant to be reasonable and too committed to my own ideas to really listen to different points of view. I am certain that I am not alone in this regard.³ In this regard, Arendt is more successful at making us question the purpose of our actions. Their work becomes more powerful when it is applied to the site of difference, the city.

**The Public in the City**

The history of the city can be viewed as a long contest over the exercise of urban public space. It is in the city where “different people with different projects must necessarily struggle with one another over the shape of the city, the terms of access to the public realm, and even the rights of citizenship” (Mitchell, D. 2003, 18). The city, then, is a great place to study, using Kathryn Mitchell’s (1997, 162) phrase, “[c]onflicting geographies of democracy.” Crucial to this process is an examination of how the social and physical boundaries of public space are negotiated.

Geographers have been keen to capture the sense of disorder and claim-making that occurs on the streets and in other public spaces, but they can be accused of treating public space as though it were conceptually stable. It is not uncommon to find authors

who have acknowledged the conflictual nature of public space while simultaneously ignoring the fact that these conflicts actually produce space.

According to Peter Goheen (1998) the promise of the public sphere for city life has produced two very different assessments. In the first understanding, Goheen (1998, 479, 482) recognizes Richard Sennett as the “principal protagonist” in producing a view that sees “the loss of relevance and power of the public in the contemporary city.” In The Fall of Public Man (1992[1974]), Richard Sennett outlines the deterioration of communication and the decline of citizen involvement in the modern city. Taking his lead from Arendt and Habermas, Sennett examines the confusion that arose about the meaning of public and intimate life during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He too believes that the blurring of public and private life is problematic. In particular, Sennett (1992[1974]) explores four principal ways that people have become dangerously inward looking: (1) involuntary disclosure of character; (2) superimposition of public and private imagery; (3) defense through withdrawal; and (4) silence. When referring to involuntary disclosure, Sennett highlights how material conditions have made individuals less distinguishable from one another. He argues that individual status has become uncertain and it is difficult to read order in a crowd. The superimposition argument promotes the notion that public expression must contain personal expression in order for it to be authentic. In Sennett’s view this is a dangerous practice and thus people hide their true selves through the use of illusion. Next, Sennett suggests that people avoid expressing feeling in public so that they are not read by others. They hide within their private selves

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4 In his, Great Cat Massacre (1984), Robert Darton, has shown how the bourgeois in the eighteenth century always wanted to know the status of the crowd, how they wanted their world in order. This desire, led to the claim that individuals of lower classes should be made to wear distinctive markers on their clothing so their mixing into the citizenry could be impeded (see Darton 1984, 107-144).
so they do not have to participate in the experience of public self. For Sennett, it is easier to be an observer than to be an actor or participant. Here we find a hint of Arendt’s claim that behaviour has replaced action. Finally, Sennett argues that the combination of the above conditions has lead to a new personality in public, one of silence.

Sennett presents the nineteenth century urbanite as visible but isolated (Sennett 1992[1974]; Goheen 1998). In short, his four ‘barometers of distress’ characterize modern citizens as passive, guarded, defensive, less willing to participate in public life and more aware of feelings of alienation. In turn, public life, according to Sennett is becomingly increasingly defined by privatism, individualism, less confident self-identity and avoidance. As the public loses sight of its agency, Sennett claims that the public sphere has lost its power and relevancy. For Sennett (1970, 39) city dwellers are not simply looking to escape the city as a physical environment but they have also “sought to escape each other.”

For Goheen (1998), the pessimism of Sennett’s viewpoint needs to be challenged. Tracing the work of Philip Ethington (1994) and Sharon Zukin (1995), Goheen (1998) develops a more positive assessment of the value of the public space. In these authors’ works, Goheen (1998, 483) finds that “people and institutions” continue “to stake their claims to influence by exerting their rights to occupy and control culturally significant urban public space.” Here, public space remains important because people are aware of its value and they know how to use and manipulate it. Goheen finds that the effects are not always desirable, but maintains that since negotiation over the meaning of public space remains open, its potential cannot be closed.
What makes Goheen’s work impressive is his synthesis of why different authors can come to such radically different conclusions on the significance of public space in the modern city. Briefly, Goheen (1998) explains that our assessments of the public sphere and public space in the modern city are often influenced by our opinions on: (1) how we view the role of politics; (2) the importance we place on everyday practices; (3) how we interpret public and private spheres; and (4) how we attribute significance to public space. Goheen (1998) reminds us that defining public space has always been an exercise in trying to give shape to something that is conceptually unstable. He stresses that public space is best understood as a socially constructed category that is constantly defined as a result of competing ideas on its nature and purpose. There is no place for negativism in Goheen’s account as public spaces and the public sphere are continually renegotiated, their intensity and vibrancy legitimated by everyday experiences. Ultimately, Goheen argues that the public sphere is a collective invention, its contours shaped by those willing to stake a claim to it—by those willing to take a risk.

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5 Is urban politics within our grasp, or has it become divorced from meaningful input by ordinary citizens? Have commercial and legal interests eroded our ability to demand attention or can we still inject our values, make claims and become recognized in “the political arena that is the city” (Goheen 1998, 487)? Has action been replaced by behaviour as Arendt claims?

6 Can we change the rules of the game (as Habermas describes)? Can we see a subversive potential in everyday actions?

7 Have we retreated into the private realm? Are the definitions of these spheres malleable? Where do we locate meaning? How do we come together in the modern city?

8 “How important is the exercise of rights in public by ordinary residents thought to be” (Ethington quoted in Goheen 1998, 493)?
The politicization of urban public space

Don Mitchell has captured the politics of public space in a series of articles written during the 1990s as well as in his book, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (2003). Similar to Arendt, he (Mitchell, D. 2003, 35) argues that space becomes public space when “the cry and demand for the right to the city can be seen and heard …when, to fulfill a pressing need, some group or another takes space and through its actions makes it public.”

Mitchell’s work poses two challenges for those seeking to demonstrate the relevance of the modern public sphere. First, he demonstrates that a significant portion of our collective deliberation has moved to arenas that are more readily amenable to monopolized control: “communication and meaning have more and more moved “inside”: inside the radio, television, and internet, inside the mall and shopping center, and inside the movie house” (Mitchell, D. 2000, 86). Such pseudopublic spaces, Mitchell contends, are also almost always privately owned. Here the opportunity for manipulation by government and private interests is ever present (Staeheli & Thompson 1997; Sorkin 1992; Boyer 1996). In such spaces, private voices are not coming together in the Habermasian sense to discuss common interests, rather they seek to advance a narrower personal agenda often dictated by profit. Here, the high degree of commodification has strained the type of sociability that Arendt emphasizes because in these pseudopublic spaces, conflict is mitigated not celebrated. With the purpose of such spaces lost in the “sea of plural voices”, and with the control of the agenda relinquished to corporations, Christine Boyer (1996, 4) argues that in pseudo-public spaces “the better argument yields no collective weight.” Framed in this manner, public spaces are “transformed into
‘mere’ signs, symbols of something else, rather than valued in their own right’ (Mitchell, D. 2000, 138). Such spaces, both through design and law, have been stripped of their political potential. Without question, people find the bodily comfort of such spaces appealing. Pseudopublic spaces are often less threatening, the experience of these spaces are often more manageable, even to the point of being predictable. Yet, the price of increased comfort has been a reduction of the political promise of these spaces: “[p]eople become comfortable by giving up their active political involvement in space and acquiescing instead in becoming spectators of the urban ‘scene’” (Mitchell, D. 2000, 138). When the politics of symbolism and representation replace less mediated interaction, the democratic ideal of public space becomes tainted (Mitchell, D. 2003). The narrative of loss is compelling here and is more fully elaborated by Rosalyn Deutsche (1998, online):

The term “public space” is one component of a rhetoric of democracy that, in some of its widespread forms, is used to justify less than democratic politics: the creation of exclusionary urban spaces, state coercion and censorship, surveillance, economic privatization, the repression of differences and attacks on the rights of the most expendable members of society, on the rights of strangers and the very idea of rights – on what Hannah Arendt called “the right to have rights.” The term public frequently serves as an alibi under whose protection authoritarian agendas are pursued and justified.

Mitchell and Deutsche are not arguing that all is lost, nor are they suggesting that fragmented publics are powerless to stop large corporate and state interests. Instead they
are providing a sound warning of what is at stake when people are denied access to the process of defining the public, and when they accept pseudопublic spaces as suitable stand-ins for public spaces that have the potential to be far more combustible. This is why geographers such as Don Mitchell and Peter Goheen are fascinated with the politics of the street.

Unlike shopping malls, streets have proven to be more resistant to control and therefore they offer a different series of clues about the meaning and value of public space. Streets continue to accommodate the politics of presence that intrigued Arendt. It is difficult to dismiss the claims being made by a crowd in the street in the same way one can put aside a letter-to-the-editor. The taking of physical space for Mitchell (2003) is a critical step in creating a space for representation. Public democracy, in Mitchell’s (2003, 148) view, “requires public visibility, and public visibility requires material public spaces.”

Mitchell privileges urban public spaces because they literally make the struggle over the ‘right to the city’ visible. This view is shared by Painter and Philo (1995, 115) who add:

If people cannot be present in public space (streets, squares, parks, cinemas, churches, town halls) without feeling uncomfortable, victimised and basically ‘out of place’, then it must be questionable whether or not these people can be regarded as citizens at all: or, at least, whether they will regard themselves as full citizens on an equal footing with other people who seem perfectly ‘at home’ when moving about in public spaces.
For Mitchell social justice and access to public space cannot be divorced from one another and yet he effectively demonstrates through a series of case studies that sometimes legal guarantees such as the right to assembly and free speech are suspended. The struggle over inclusion and ongoing examples of exclusion (i.e. homeless people) reveals that there is no guarantee that individuals and groups can participate in the making and use of public space. An examination of street politics often reveals that the use of force is the principle means of expression for groups seeking to assert legitimacy and gain entry into the public sphere.

The necessity or willingness to use force introduces Mitchell’s second challenge for those seeking to demonstrate the political potential of the public sphere. By having to resort to the use of force (violence), those seeking entry in the public sphere signal the failure of the public sphere as sphere of rationale debate and the calculated use of reason (Montang 2000). “[T]o speak from the street is not to engage in authentic discourse (or communicative action) …To speak from the street is to speak from outside the public sphere, not just the bourgeois public sphere, but any public sphere as Habermas defines it” (Montang 2000, 141). The street, Montang (2000, 142) argues “does not discuss, it demands.”

Having to take space by breaking the law (Mitchell, D. 2003; Oliver 2002) makes it clear that not everyone has a democratic right to public space (Berman 1986; Deutsche 1996). Using the homeless population of Berkeley, Mitchell usefully demonstrates how physical dispossession is linked to social dispossession.9 Having been forced out of both public space and pseudopublic spaces, Mitchell contends that the homeless population is

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9 For a nice illustration of the difference between violence as force versus violence as violation see Buffachi (2005).
“unrepresented in our images of ‘the public’” and as such have been “banished to a realm outside of politics because they are banished from the gathering places of the city” (Mitchell, D. 2003, 141). Denied access, engagement and voice the homeless are prevented from participating in a conversation about our (their) collective future. In essence, their right to the city is denied.

**Conclusion**

If we recognize both the importance of Habermas’s commitment to deliberative democracy and Arendt’s dedication to the spaces of appearance we are well positioned to understand that “[p]ublic space is made, not born” (Acconci 1990). Thinking about how space is public requires us to think about the work that was done to produce it and how it continues to influence spatial practice. When thinking about the relevance of the public sphere to everyday life the Habermasian understanding of the public sphere, located between the market and the state, retains value because it conveys the idea that the public’s judgment matters. From this perspective we can begin to talk about politics as something more than the simple registering of how politics occurs (i.e. parties, legislature, and government).

What is recognized in public space is the legitimacy of debate, a debate in which no one can seek the support of an external judge … It is the space where people declare rights and which, paradoxically, is constituted through the declaration. A fixed point of access to politics, a unique space of the political, an essence of social reality: these are obstacles to the spread of public space which is always in gestation. (Deustche 1992, 51)
Where obstacles do emerge they upset the process of negotiating rights. At these times we must ask ourselves: whose interests are being served? It is in these situations, where we can begin to imagine how the process which confers legitimacy to specific interests is a process that confers legitimacy to certain spaces. Why exactly is public space important? Because without it we are deprived of the experience of politics, we are destined to be passive consumers or spectators of our urban surroundings and we are left to our own resources to resolve our private grievances.
In the last chapter, we examined the concern over the decline of the public sphere. We saw that the erosion of the boundaries between public and private life created an opening for the formation of a political public sphere, but we also learned that political action has been constrained by increased privatization and fragmentation. We found that the problem with the public sphere’s structural transformation is linked to the degeneration of the world we have in common. Public space has increasingly become a site of spectatorship or consumption, in Habermas’s opinion, not a place where citizens exercise rights.

This chapter turns to a discussion of sport as an alternate means to consider the relevance of public space in shaping our urban futures. That sport “finds its location in ordinary culture” (Ingham and McDonald 2003, 17) and provides a common talking point
(Fulford 2006), makes it useful for highlighting the dilemmas of the public sphere. The notion of the Habermasian public sphere predicated on accessibility, autonomy, rejection of hierarchy, rule of law and quality of participation becomes readily comprehensible when linked to sport. Without question modern sporting institutions are riddled with the same evictions that have plagued other important cultural institutions (i.e. class, race and gender divides). Like the Habermasian public sphere, a level playing field remains an ideal. As Pierre Bourdieu (1978, 826) puts it, “the legitimate definition of sporting practice and the legitimate functioning of sporting activity” is contested terrain.

Using the language of the previous chapter we might say that sport not only allows for the practice of politics but it is the stage upon which political realities are enacted. If we consider Lyn Loftland’s (1998) rationale for the continued valuation of the public realm we find that few other areas of cultural life can compete with sport in ensuring the health of the public realm. As Loftland (1998) notes, the utility of the public realm is linked to its ability to: (1) be an environment for learning; (2) provide a site of respite and refreshment; (3) act as a center of communication; (4) offer a place to practice politics; (5) become a stage for the enactment of social arrangements and social conflict; and (6) facilitate the creation of cosmopolitans. From this perspective we can begin to imagine how “[s]port cannot be a model for public life but it might provide a lingering bastion of public life” (Hughson et al. 2005, 51). The point is that sport gathers people together, and at the very least has the potential to be a space for deliberation. It can also be a space of manipulation.

This chapter explores the making of sporting culture in Toronto and the commitment to amateurism in sport. I argue, firstly, that in the attempt to establish
cultural legitimacy and authority Toronto’s rising middle-class used sport to communicate an array of cultural values that bridged spiritual, social and political life. In particular they saw sport through the moral lens of Muscular Christianity but intertwined elements of modern ambition and understandings of progress. With guidance from the newly emerging middle class, sporting culture in Toronto claimed an ethos of achievement that was built upon a rich brew of emulation and invented tradition. Crucial to the process of capturing control of amateur sport in the city was the middle class’s vocational and organizational expertise. By attaching their business expertise to a commitment of amateurism, Toronto’s middle class asserted their authority.

The commitment to amateurism meant confronting the growing commercial and professional interest in sport. This chapter demonstrates that the desire for bourgeois respectability was connected to the promotion of amateurism, a code word for their influence. Despite being weakly defined, the definition and status of an amateur came to be protected through the organization of modern sport clubs and national policies. I end the chapter hinting that Toronto’s sporting directors turned to the emergence of the modern Olympic Games to prolong the life of the amateur ideal.

**Everyday Sport**

Few of us would be surprised to learn that “[m]ost Americans [and Canadians] know more about sport and sports than they do about politics, science, religion, or their own Constitution” (Dyreson 1998, 1). Yet what makes sport particularly interesting in comparison to these other topics is that when it comes to sport “[o]pinion, in fact, is mandatory” (Fulford 2006, 10). Sport, Dyreson (1998, 1) argues, is “the most important institution through which many Americans [and Canadians] deliberate political, racial,
ethical, and social questions.” Dyreson (2001, 24) challenges us to consider: “[w]hat other antebellum reform movement besides sport still have such cultural power at the end of the twentieth century?” So completely has sport infiltrated cultural life that it has come to viewed even by those who find sport distasteful or overbearing as “a structured, organized world that satisfies some of our need for meaning” (Fulford 2006, 13). In short, sport occupies a privileged place in civic consciousness.

Can sport serve as a bastion of public life? In The Uses of Sport: A Critical Study, John Hughson et al. (2005, 51) draw on the work of Richard Sennett to argue that sport “unsullied by utilitarian interference, provides an arena of impersonality par excellence.” According to David Karp and William Yoels (1990, 97), sport provides a universal language for people and thereby lubricates the gears of social interaction. Sport gives even strangers access to each other. While, norms of non-involvement characterize public places, sport is one of the few topics that seems to legitimate strangers initiating contact with each other.

Sport puts people into contact with one another both as individuals and as groups, as participants or as spectators. Spectatorship gives a citizenry a common interest and, as Barth (1980) suggests, helps individuals to build communal bonds. Watching a baseball game, for example, is a public experience that provides individuals with an opportunity to encounter strangers. The status of being a fan helps to reduce social distinctions, the limited duration and structured nature of the competition helps to create conversational comfort. Drawing upon a shared knowledge of the players, the team, or the game aids the social exchange between people. During an athletic contest people often relax their
personal barriers. Where else is face-paint used in such quantities? Sporting events often function as liminal time-outs from everyday life where people cheer and clap and often celebrate their own identities (Melnick 1993).

Through sport “[p]eople observe the rules of conduct of the game; sport is a form of social theatre in which the social actor engages in the art of playacting” (Hughson et al. 2005, 69). The opportunity to experience sociability is the reward. For example, historians have suggested that baseball aided immigrants in understanding how the ‘rules of the game’ can be extended to everyday urban life (Barth 1980). The goals of efficiency, competition, and organization were lessons that all urban dwellers could profit from.

From the above perspectives, sport is valuable not only because it satisfies Arendt’s emphasis on face-to-face visibility but it also caters to Habermas’ emphasis on following the rules. By connecting with sport, both the rules of play acting and codes of civility are transmitted to participants and spectators (Hughson 2005, 69). Or, as one journal editor has put it: “[t]he glory of the athletic human specimen within a framework of mutually respected rules is more than a simple contest. It is the affirmation of a shared moral playing field” (Castel 2006, 7).

**Locating a moral playing field**

One of Canada’s principal sport historians, Richard Gruneau, has noted that many of Canada’s early nineteenth century sporting practices were surprisingly pluralistic. It was not unusual, Gruneau (2006, 563) explains, for “athletes from privileged family backgrounds to compete in the same competitions with manual labourers and tradesmen.” Gruneau raises the point to set the stage for a more elaborate discussion on the patterns of
domination that came to characterize late nineteenth century sporting culture in Canada. I will return to Gruneau’s analysis momentarily. Presently, I think it is important to provide a brief sketch of why we should treat this perceived pluralism delicately.

Considering the democratization of sport in countries such as France and England, Thomas Hendricks (1984, 3) argues that we find sporting culture at the center of the “tug-of-war between old and new”. The confluence between the “old rural oligarchy and new industrial money”, or more broadly between the rural and the urban, marked the demographic division for Hendricks (1984, 3). Not unlike Gruneau’s claim, Hendricks suggests that in eighteenth century England there was a mingling of gentry and peasantry at numerous spectator events (e.g. boxing, horse racing, cricket). But, as Hendricks explains, finding evidence of social mingling does not mean that sport was culturally democratic. To determine the latter, he argues we have to ask: “did people of different ranks play the same games and applaud the same values” (Hendricks 1984, 4)? He addresses his question through an analysis of fox hunting amongst other activities. Unlike the battue\textsuperscript{10}, fox hunting did not have property qualifications, which meant that farmers and the urban middle class could freely join organized hunts. Attendance, Howe (1981, 285) summarizes, did not “depend upon invitation, membership, or land ownership” and “even strangers” could “show up to ride.” This condition can be read as having created “a public context for the sport…[the hunt] offered a setting in which the farmer might

\textsuperscript{10} A battue refers to a type of hunt where bushes or woods are rattled to flush out game. As Munsche (1981, 89) explains, the battue was a “type of shooting party” that grew in popularity after the flintlock was created. With new weaponry, marksmanship grew in importance and came to critical factor in determining a hunter’s skill. The result was the “intensive breeding of game” and the creation of game preservations (Munsche 1981, 89) that had associated property restrictions. In more simple terms we find that shooting took place on land that was owned or rented and therefore “remained a private and restrictive pastime” (Howe 1981, 285).
participate on a more or less equal basis with his social superiors” (Hendricks 1984, 5). The result, Howe (1981, 285) explains was that the “social standing of participants in these fields often spans a considerable range, from titled aristocracy, through minor gentry and tenant farmers, all the way to the laborers and town dwellers who watch the riders assemble or who follow on foot.” Hendricks (1984, 5) claims that when arguments arose about the cruelty of the sport, “this theme of class-mixing was a keystone in its defense.” Citing John Hawkes’s observation that “[t]he Field is a most agreeable coffee-house, and there is more real society to be met with there than in any other situation in life,” Hendricks (1984, 5) argues that fox hunting may indeed be thought of as a socially democratic cultural phenomena (albeit in a limited sense given the absence of women).

A cultural caveat emerges, though, when we examine the organization of the hunt. With elite influence fox hunting moved beyond a simple exercise in finding and shooting a pestilent animal. Instead, it came to be dominated by an intricate and expensive repertoire of equipment and assistance. Particular horses and breeds of dogs, substitute mounts, specific shooting apparatuses, salaries for stable hands and other attendants, and other requirements inflated the costs. Hunting for sport had become a pricey proposition that led groups of gentlemen to organize themselves into clubs to help spread the expenses. These clubs had limited memberships, had closed functions (dinners, balls) and often used uniforms to help distinguish their representatives. Here, we find that the hunt created an additional social environment that was neither open nor equal. What of the hunt itself? Given the access to superior resources, the chase was usually ‘won’ by a ‘gentleman’, confirming that in sport as in other areas of public culture, “the gentle class
could seem to emerge as the “natural” as well as the “social” leaders of the community” (Hendricks 1984, 7).

Hendricks (1984) dips into the development of several other sports and each time he emerges with a similar pattern of upper class appropriation of activities that traditionally had been the province of common folk. Through cultural modifications in the form of “exclusive clubs and refining and standardizing rules, they established themselves as guardians of the activity” (Hendricks 1984, 11). As we shall see, this was a pattern that was repeated with numerous sports on the other side of the Atlantic, albeit a century later and by a different class of men.

**Toronto: A sporting city?**

On the 22 May 1886, readers of *The Globe* were informed of the opening of the new Toronto Baseball Grounds\textsuperscript{11} located on Queen St. East just East of the Don Bridge. The readership was also reminded that the city’s lacrosse team, the *Torontos*, would be playing their first game of the season at the Rosedale Athletic Grounds (now Rosedale Park) on the 24\textsuperscript{th}. On the same page of the newspaper, a host of other events were announced including a fireworks show at the horticulural gardens and the new zoological gardens at Exhibition Park. The 22\textsuperscript{nd} of May, 1886, was a Saturday, but all of the above events were part of the celebratory schedule designed to honour the Queen’s Birthday. That Toronto’s citizenry was encouraged to attend sporting events reveals something about the growing role of sport in urban centers during the second half of the nineteenth century.

\textsuperscript{11} The Toronto Baseball Grounds came to be known as Sunlight Park because of the presence of the Sunlight Soap Works factory that was adjacent to the diamond. The soap factory is now BMW Toronto.
We might begin by noting that the baseball game was to be played between Toronto and Rochester, an American team. Here we find that the expansion of the rail lines had made possible the prospect of inter-city competition. No doubt the announcement by *The Toronto World* (25 May 1886, 4) a few days later indicating that the local team had won both games was written with the intent of bolstering local civic pride. On the other hand, the fact that Canadians were playing an American game on the Queen’s birthday may speak to a different sense of pride.

We might also ask questions about the spectators. What type of sport was the audience watching? Where were they sitting? It was reported that 2,500 spectators attended the first game and an even greater number watched the second (*The Toronto World*, 25 May 1886, 4). Many of the fans had chosen to pay the extra admission price to sit under the roofed grandstand or for a lesser fare in the wooden bleachers. Some would have secured their reserved seats in advance by purchasing their tickets at McKenna’s bookstore or at other locales. We can imagine that some spectators would have sported gloves, caps or other paraphernalia given that such items were now mass-produced and sold by local merchants. Should they have felt inclined they could have kept track of the game via a scorecard which would have been sold to help generate revenue. While not every fan might have been familiar with the names of players, it would be no trouble for many to recite the basic rules (i.e. nine innings unless there was a tie, nine players on the field, three outs per inning and so on). For those who could not make the games, they would have been able to read the results in the newspapers, many of which had established dedicated sports pages by the mid-1880s.
Would it have mattered to those in attendance or the reading public that His Honour Lieutenant Governor Robinson threw the ceremonial first pitch? Would the fact that he took great delight in seeing “all classes of Anglo Saxons entered into athletics of every kind,” or that he thought that “these manly sports and friendly contests at baseball, cricket and lacrosse, were doing more to cement the union between Englishmen, Australians, Americans and Canadians than any visionary” have meant anything (*The Globe* 24 May 1886, 3)?

The declaration that the baseball game was “one of the most attractive amusements” by *The Globe* (22 May 1886, 2) is indicative of the cultural valence that sporting events had garnered in Victorian Toronto. The use of the word amusement is also important because it indicates that a baseball game was one of several entertainment options for a population that had an increasing amount of leisure time and discretionary income.

**Defining sport in Toronto: the middle class put their world in order**

Nancy Bouchier (2003, 60) has usefully demonstrated that in the late nineteenth century sport reformers often used local civic holidays to “project respectability and boost urban pride.” Bouchier’s use of the word respectability is critical, for it was the “urban, middle-class males of British background” (Kidd 1996, 15) who have been credited with laying the foundations of modern sports in Canada. Sporting culture in Canada emerged, as Colin Howell (2001, 28) has put it: “[u]nder the watchful eye of an
emerging Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie” who used sport as “a social technology” in an effort to “create a ‘respectable’ social order and a deeper allegiance to nation and Empire.”

I mentioned earlier that Gruneau provides some evidence of class mingling in Canada’s sporting culture in the early nineteenth century. If we were, however, to begin our investigation post-1850, we would find that “class and racial prejudices in sport began to crystallize into a set of more formal rules of exclusion” (Gruneau 2006, 564). The desire for evictions helped to place an emphasis on the meaning of amateurism.

At the root of amateurism, Gruneau (2006) claims, was an underlying tension between those who viewed sport as a powerful tool for instilling positive social values and those who used it to repel social inferiors from their social circle. Amateurism was based on the notion of disinterested play and served to segregate those who played for the love of the game from individuals interested in partaking because of financial reward (i.e. gamblers and professionals). For Gruneau (2006, 564-565) the concept of amateurism must be considered an “invented tradition”12 and a “distinctly modern creation” that was the result of both “reactionary” and “progressive” ideals. It was firmly rooted in class politics.

The reactionary element to the promotion of amateurism was the response by those whose social status became insecure with the rise of the middle class associated with industrial growth. As Gruneau (2006) explains, prior to widespread industrialization it was not risky for upper-class sportsmen to compete against members of the lower strata – the security of their positions could not be threatened by a sporting defeat. Yet with an aggregating industrial population this confidence diminished. The result was a degree of

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12 Hobsbawm (1983,1) defines an invented tradition as “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.”
retrenchment by many elites into “patrician enclaves” and a “more defensive and isolationist” attitude (Gruneau 2006, 566).

In Toronto, Joyce (1997) argues, the loyalty of the Family Compact to the British Crown helped to transfer the sporting traditions of Eton, Rugby, Chester and Harrow to local soil. Sport was viewed as a means to ensure that young boys did not become too effeminate or physically weak. Officers of the garrison regiments aided in transmitting the importance of British tradition by emphasizing the honour, courage, commitment and sense of duty that could be found in learning the arts of riding and shooting as well as by participating in a good game of cricket. The curriculum at Upper Canada College and the playing fields of many private clubs confirmed the superiority of the Tory elites. That the clubs had exclusive memberships that were carefully guarded through the use of anonymous elections, mid-week contests and high membership fees was one way to ensure that class separation remained obvious (Joyce 1997). The insularity of yacht clubs, bowling clubs, and golf and country clubs insured that sociability would be based on class hierarchy.

With regard to more accessible sports, the crucial point is that the distinction between gentlemen and players mattered. At a time when the idea of practicing was thought to go against the wisdom of disinterested play, it was reasoned that members of the working class (i.e. artisans, laborers, mechanics) had an unfair advantage in sport because of their occupational status. Here, proficiency with one’s hands for example, was equated with professional status and as a result skilled players were excluded from participation. Framed in this manner, amateurism was a code word used to guard group relations and social distinction.
In the second half of the nineteenth century, the elitist view of amateurism was challenged by a new progressive element that sought to redefine the rationale for sport. Unlike the members of Toronto’s Family Compact, this group had “new and different sources of wealth and power” (Bouchier 2003, 9). Linked to the emergence of industrial capitalism and tied in with the twin forces of urbanization and immigration, this new group “carried with it an emphasis on respectability and improvement, focusing its world view upon accomplishment – political, economical, and social – achieved through personal initiative and merit” (Bourchier 2003, 9). Here we find that the civilizing potential of sport stems largely from the influence of the urban middle class’s social culture and its evangelical pursuit of “Muscular Christianity” (Kidd 2006). The processes contributing to urbanization were central to a transformation in sport. The development of a new urban class along with numerous technological revolutions produced new dialogues about city life. For example, the growth of rail travel not only provided both a bulk of spectators but also ushered in an era of intercollegiate sports and inter-city rivalries. In addition, the telegraph and later the newspaper helped stimulate sporting knowledge, fostered team affiliation and generated civic pride. And as we saw in our Toronto Baseball Grounds example, shifts to mass production in the factory helped to standardized and reduce the cost of athletic equipment. A baseball mitt, a bat or a bicycle became items that were desired not simply by the leisured class but by the leisured masses (Betts 1953; Karp and Yoels 1990). As the popularity of sport increased so too did the number of conversations about the value and role of sport. Could sport act as a social safety valve for residents living in cramped urban quarters? Did it have a broader political utility?
Similar to numerous other urban movements of social reform (e.g. urban health or parks), those who emphasized a progressive role for sport were largely from the “same urban British-Canadian middle class, the professionals, small businessmen and skilled workers of cities and towns” (Kidd 2006, 705). Not unlike members of the Family Compact, this progressive group borrowed the British public school lessons of manly character, obedience, and moral fortitude (or gentlemanly athleticism) that had been conveyed in novels such as Thomas Hughes’s, *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* (1857) and Charles Kingsley’s *Two Years Ago* (1857). Where they differed, however, was on their commitment to promoting the ability of sport (athletic clubs) to help generate new ideas about self-improvement and personal responsibility. Their principal message was that rational recreation could lead to social betterment.

While paying respect to British tradition, this middling class borrowed from their American neighbours arguing that there was no need to place restrictions on those who had more humble social origins so long as they “demonstrated complete devotion to the idea of sport as a fair and morally grounded area of cultural life” (Gruneau 2006, 571). As in other facets of cultural life, bourgeois reformers acted as ‘moral entrepreneurs’ (Kidd 2006).

By emphasizing the benefits of rational recreation, sport reformers sought to stamp out those irrational elements of popular culture (gambling, alcohol, prostitution). While it was principally urban middle class youth who provided the initial source of concern, reform efforts quickly sought to replace the unorganized and violent blood sports (involving brutality to animals) and rowdy working class recreational pursuits with more refined leisure activities (Kidd 2006; Howell 2001). Along with the creation of
libraries, museums, public halls and parks, participation in proper sporting contests was presented as a more appropriate use of leisure time. In short, the reformers aimed to democratize sport but worked to cultivate values at the same time.

To accomplish these dual tasks, Toronto’s sport reformers frequently emulated developments south of the border. The political potential of sport to help frame critical questions concerning class, race, gender, citizenship, equity, power and other critical concerns of the republican experiment made it particularly appealing for progressive ideologues in the United States (Dyreson 1989). Specifically, Dyreson (1989, 263-264) claims that,

Progressives attempted to utilize sport as an instrument for directing modern energies in efficient directions, inculcating the democratic ethos, teaching respect for law and constitutionalism, assimilating immigrants into American culture, assuaging the evils associated with cities and factories, and insuring the vigor of the nation.

Through promoting urban athleticism at community playgrounds, school gymnasiums, in factory recreation programs and city stadiums, as well as at private locales, there was the opportunity to reduce the growing social distance between classes. The utility of sport, however, was not limited to its ability to reduce place-based anomie. As Dyreson (1998, 17) explains, “[A] national devotion to sport might spark a common discourse among the atomized citizens wandering the socio-economic battlefields of their rapidly modernizing republic.”13 Here we find that part of the appeal of sport can be linked to its ability to jump scales. Locally, the desire for breathing, play and sporting spaces may have been expressed as a suitable way to let off steam, but the same arguments that promoted sport

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13 Sport been used a way for geographers to understand the performance of the body.
as a means of increasing public hygiene and healthier citizens could also attract national attention. Far from simply being good urbanites, healthier, happier men were more productive workers and stronger soldiers. In addition, as sporting competitions expanded from local to national and then international rivalries, sporting supremacy could be used to propagate political and ideological systems (Keys 2006). Sporting superiority had a role in the order of nations. The underlying premise is that the desire for fair play or following the spirit of the rules being practiced in sporting life can expand into different venues and inform other topics. Unlike other forms of entertainment, sport contains a “fixed machinery of conditions” or can be “defined and ordered by structured rules, codes of conduct, and definite goals” (Dyreson 1998, 11). Sport can provide “a language of shared symbols with encoded social and political meanings” (Dyreson 1998 18). Placed in a historical context, we find that the utility of sport has often been not at all sporting. Instead, it has provided a suitable cultural lever for the cultivation of values. As mentioned, this aspect of sport was not ignored by Toronto’s moral entrepreneurs.

**Organizing Amateur Sport**

In Canada we find that the power of amateur sports clubs was instrumental in shaping what was played, where it was played, how it was played and by whom. Summarizing the work of several Canadian sport historians Bruce Kidd has argued that in Canadian sports it was “Montrealers – or, more precisely, the middle-class, English-speaking male Montrealers from the ward of St Antoine—who made ‘a particular way of

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14 Dyreson borrows the phrase from the American philosopher William James to illustrate that sport is rule bound competition. The lessons learned from competing within the rules against opponents who were equally committed to fair play provided the *conditions* that would allow all participants to learn lessons that could be applied to the real world. From this perspective sport “could produce a nation committed to fair play and rule by law” (Dyreson 1998, 11).

15 The question of why different segments of the population played still requires considerable scrutiny.
playing the *way* of playing.’ Kidd credits the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association’s (M.A.A.A.), formed in 1881, as having paved the way for creation of national rules. It was the first multi-sport association in Canada and “represented a collection of the new breed of industrial era sportsman—the middle class” (Morrow 1981, 31). At risk of overstating the point, Metcalfe’s (1976, 83) examination of M.A.A.A.’s membership reveals that there was “a lack of representation from the political, industrial and educational power elite; by 1901 the Molsons, Redpaths, and Allans were conspicuous by their absence; few professors from McGill were members and no reference could be found to the local and provincial political leaders.”

That Montreal came to be the cradle of Canadian sport should not be a surprise. Organized modern sport relied on an urban population and Montreal was the nation’s premier city. What began with the merging of the Montreal Snow Shoe Club (1846), the Montreal Lacrosse Club (1856) and the Montreal Bicycle Club (1878) quickly expanded to include a massive collection of diverse clubs (i.e. boxing, chess, drama, bowling, football, etc.). While the association functioned as a hub—or a ‘winged wheel’—merging different sporting interests, it actually helped instill a pyramid structure stretching from mass recreation (i.e. bowling, billiards) all the way to international competition (i.e. lacrosse, skating). The club house and grounds of the M.A.A.A. provided a concentrated center and “weaned sport away from much of its previous reliance upon such social institutions as bees, garrisons, taverns and so forth” (Stidwell 1981, 13).

The effectiveness of the M.A.A.A. was rooted in its financial strength. While all clubs within the association maintained individual autonomy with respect to their own executive committees and internal management, financial resources were pooled.
Membership dues not only helped defray the costs of equipment purchases and facility purchase and rental, but they also bolstered widespread advertising campaigns that significantly increased the public visibility of the M.A.A.A. and those sports under its direction. The use of coaches and trainers aided the results of the association’s athletes at the more competitive levels. The winged wheel logo of the M.A.A.A. also brought recognition on the local streets particularly from members of bicycle club who wore emblematic clothing. But it was victories at major competitions across the country that “served to propel the M.A.A.A. into the limelight of Canadian sport” (Morrow 1981, 34).

With increased membership, the M.A.A.A. sought to protect its cherished amateur ideology. “None but those of bona-fide amateur standing, and then only if nothing derogatory to their character is known, are eligible for admission”, were admitted to the association (Whyte 1888, 30). Outlining the strength of the M.A.A.A. in an 1888 contribution to *Outing*, William Whyte (1888, 30) explained:

>c>reed and politics are strictly tabooed, nor does the association allow its name to be used in any way except for the furtherance of genuine amateur sport. Its objects are fully explained in the first clause of its excellent by-laws, viz: “Its objects shall be the encouragement of athletic sports, the promotion of physical and mental culture among, and the providing of rational amusement and recreation for its members,” and has successfully carried this idea out.

The annual fee of ten dollars (two dollars for a member’s wife, sister or daughter) in 1888 also ensured that the membership was selective but not restrictive. Whyte made it clear that admission was “jealously guarded” with each application subject to scrutiny. The
rigid standards for membership can be linked to the M.A.A.A.’s concern with increased professionalism in sport, a situation they linked to violence, cheating and ungentlemanly conduct.\textsuperscript{16} Again Whyte’s (1888, 31) description is helpful:

\begin{quote}
the moral influences of the M.A.A.A. are very considerable. Honor and fair play are inculcated, gambling and strong drink not tolerated on its premises or grounds…Pure amateur sport of all kinds is encouraged, and anything tending to professionalism or hippodroming\textsuperscript{17} strongly opposed. A loyal feeling for everything Canadian and national is engendered, and in fact no more healthy and strong moral organization exists for young men anywhere; and if the members only remain true to themselves and the honor of the association, dubious moral characters will look elsewhere for more congenial associates, and the world-wide reputation of the M.A.A.A. will never suffer.
\end{quote}

It was with this degree of self-certainty and the distaste for professionalism that the M.A.A.A. proposed the creation of an Amateur Athletic Association of Canada (A.A.A. of C.) to serve as a national association governing amateur sport. At the first organizational meeting, dominated by M.A.A.A. clubs, the governance structure of the A.A.A. of C. was decided upon. As expected, the new organization gave a dominant voting voice to the M.A.A.A.’s members. Through the adoption of a series of by-laws the

\textsuperscript{16} As many sport historians have pointed out the adherence to the amateur code would have benefited the Montreal Lacrosse Club immensely. The M.L.C. was frequently defeated by intra-city rivals, the Shamrock Lacrosse Club, a club that was formed by working-class Irish Catholics. Under the M.A.A.A.’s definition, the Shamrock players would be considered professionals (see Metcalfe 1976 and Howell 2001).

\textsuperscript{17} The arrangement of predetermined winners or the deliberate loss in a contest for monetary gain.
Montreal’s contingent institutionalized their power. Defining the word amateur was the first order of business. The A.A.A. of C. offered the following:

An amateur is one who has never competed for a money prize, or staked bet or with or against any professional for any prize, or who has taught, pursued, or assisted in the practice of athletic exercises as a means of obtaining a livelihood. (quoted in Metcalfe 1987, 105-106)

It was a definition that continued a trend of exclusion in amateur sport as it would be nearly impossible for working-class athletes to afford to compete in national events. Not only would athletes have to pay for club memberships and equipment, they would have to cover their own travel expenses without the potential to recoup any of these costs if they performed well. In essence, the A.A.A.of C.’s version of amateurism blended middle-class views with a lingering sense of upper-class exclusion. To be an amateur one had to have a measure of independent wealth and therefore many were excluded many from this bastion of public life.

In what must be regarded as one of the most insightful (and succinct) commentaries on the cultural history of sport, Peter Gay (1993, 441) notes the hypocrisy that the “cult of the amateur” represented. Drawing attention to the fact that an amateur could only be a “person who has both the time and the money to devote to his sport” Gay (1993) convincingly demonstrates the class prejudice that underscored the amateur ideal. It should be noted, however, that not all sporting culture was defined along class-based lines and that there is ample evidence that demonstrates that those who did not qualify to be amateur gentleman did produce their own organizations and traditions. I concur with the many scholars who argue that greater effort needs to be invested in examining those
individuals and groups who rejected the tenets of amateurism. It is clear that regardless of the motives particular Victorian sportsmen had in mind, their view of athleticism and amateurism proved to be contentious. As we shall see in a later section, when Montreal’s sport leaders decided to adopt a more liberal definition of amateurism, they encountered resistance from the growing sport centers in Ontario, and in particular from Toronto. While I do not discount Bourdieu’s (1978) claim that sport is contentious terrain, when thinking about the history of amateur sport in Canada, the words of Richard Bushman’s (1992, 405) are instructive:

[t]he most obvious social fact about power is that it exercises influence, not just physical coercion, but influence over hearts and minds. It compels attention. The surest sign of the end of power is unselfconscious neglect; then power no longer matters. So long as an institution is powerful, it stands at the center of attention as well as at the center of authority and force. Culture may indeed percolate up from below, and in emulating people adapt what they borrow and make it their own; but the fact remains that people at the top have an immense advantage in influencing cultural forms. To believe otherwise is to misunderstand the nature of power.

**Organizing sport in Toronto:**

By the time spectators watched the first baseball game at the Toronto Baseball Grounds, the city’s population had already witnessed four decades of extensive growth in sporting culture. The growth in number of sporting clubs (from 5 in 1845 to 186 in 1885), the increase in their diversity (from 5 to 33 different sports) and membership (from 95 to
4,564) indicates that sport was no longer the preserve of the elite (Joyce 1997). As Peter Goheen (2003) demonstrates, the 1880s were prosperous times for Toronto’s middle class. While acknowledging that the middle class was not uniform in identity, status or wealth, Goheen (2003) argues that Toronto’s middle class had come to include the smaller business man who had previously being linked to the less prestigious realm of manual labour. Through greater class awareness, improved economic circumstances and numerical growth, Toronto’s middle class came to influence the city’s physical growth (Goheen 2003). The expansion of the street railway network, the building of churches, the founding of the Toronto Industrial Exhibition, a distinctive presence at public celebrations, as well as frequent investments in other agencies were the result, Goheen (2003) argues, of a self-aware and increasingly confident middle-class. As we shall see in a later chapter part of this awareness was directed towards reclaiming the waterfront for public use. For our present purposes we find that this growing confidence translated into a demand for sport. For example, Joyce (1997) informs us that by the mid 1880s, Toronto’s citizenry could ride the street car across the city from the Don to the Exhibition Grounds. Once at the Exhibition Grounds the citizenry would have been treated to two imposing structures: the Crystal Palace and the Grand Stand (Brown 2001). For an urban historian such as Goheen (2003, 77) the purpose of the Exhibition was clear:

[t]he Exhibition was a showpiece for middle-class values: it was designed to impose order on a challenging diversity, to instill confidence in the achievement of material progress, to attract an audience through effective visual displays, to establish a sense of identity, to render a complex social landscape legible, and to provide a model of rational spatial organization
in the midst of a city growing bewilderingly complex and even incoherent to its citizens. It symbolized the modern impulse to educate and entertain and to effect social control in an urban milieu whose inhabitants were increasingly self-conscious of the social and economic distinctions which divided them.

The words “educate and entertain” in the above quotation are meaningful especially when linked to our investigation of sport. While the Crystal Palace was without question the “most potent visual symbol of the modern fair” showcasing a range of industrial and technological marvels, Douglas Brown (2001) argues that we should not neglect the importance of the Grand Stand to the overall fair-going experience. As Brown (2001, 88) argues, the Exhibition Association knew that “[f]airgoers needed to be entertained as well as educated.” A good deal of the entertainment could be found by watching various competitions of running and horse racing at the Grand Stand.

The Exhibition’s sporting program was unique in that it did not replicate the “highly sanitized bourgeois amateur club atmosphere” as it mixed professionals with amateurs and put both on public display (Brown 2001, 91). “The very public nature of sport,” at the Exhibition, Brown (2001, 93) claims, “suggests that Toronto’s amateur sportsmen were seeking more than an intrinsic sense of pleasure and satisfaction of a game well-played.” The basic point is that in the late nineteenth century, the results of sporting contests mattered.

If we return to the game at the Toronto Baseball Grounds we might now ask a very pointed question: What kind of sport were the spectators watching? The team that was cheered on to double victory that day was a professional team. Originally known as
the *Clippers* and playing their games at the Jarvis Lacrosse Grounds the team was part of the Canadian Professional League. Impressed with the team’s play, a group of Toronto businessmen formed a joint stock company (500 shares for $10) in 1885 to help secure the team’s finances (Joyce 1997). On that Saturday afternoon in May, the team was playing in a ball park specifically built for baseball, fielding imported players and competing against teams from across political boundaries.

The collection of gate receipts should be read as indicative of the growing commercial importance of sport. The Toronto Baseball Association’s decision to rent out the grounds to other local clubs, and the additional revenue from concession stands, further demonstrates that the economic potential of sport had been realized (Joyce 1997). It was members of Toronto’s financial, business and legal institutions that came to dominate the prestigious positions of Toronto’s sport clubs (i.e. John Massey, John Leys, Peter Ryan). Under their leadership, Joyce (1997) demonstrates that a commercial flavour was added to the day-to-day operations of the clubs. Commercial growth undoubtedly put pressure on those clubs which relied on open space to compete. As Joyce (1997, 249) illustrates (see Figure 4.1) the need to generate funds to expand or erect new buildings or grounds prompted many clubs to incorporate.
The result of the managerial overhaul was a transformation of the function of many sports clubs from their emphasis on sociability to the provision of events “organized and promoted primarily for public consumption” (Joyce 1997, 253). With the link to the marketplace solidified, spectator sport was rooted in Toronto’s sporting culture (Joyce 1997).

**Sport for all?**

With increased commercialism and professionalization in team sports, the promotion of the amateur ideal, the source of the moral reformers’ influence, was threatened (Gruneau 2006). For example, the editor of *The Globe* (29 March 1887, 4) commented: “Toronto is strong in clubs for the promotion of such open air games or sports as produce public exhibitions where the picked men of one organization contend against those of another.” The problem with this focus on the “production of experts”, as the editor explained, was that “ordinary members often fall short of exercise” (*The Globe*, 29 March 1887, 4). He noted that the concern over producing top-notch athletes meant that other members of such clubs missed out on the benefits of physical culture. He
claimed that teams “maintained to play public matches that produce gate money” were on their way “towards professionalism” (*The Globe*, 29 March 1887, 4). While the editor maintained that professional sport was not necessarily disgraceful, he worried about the temptations of cheating by those who pursued sport for financial gain and expressed concern about the mixing of amateurs and professionals on the same playing fields. In his view, “amateurs must give up a game which they may value highly, unless they efficiently protect the imputation of mercenary motives thereto” (*The Globe*, 29 March 1887, 4). The formation of an Amateur Association in Toronto, similar to the M.A.A.A., was the solution in his estimation. For the editor, the purpose of such an association was clear: “[t]he object of a sound amateur association is as much to exclude bad company as to further sport. The cultivation of muscle is essentially hostile to the cultivation of drinking habits and others that sap the vitality of youth” (*The Globe*, 29 March 1887, 4).

General athleticism, or as the editor put it, “physical development of each and all” was the goal (*The Globe*, 29 March 1887, 4). This required a careful definition of amateurism: 

> no definition of ‘amateurism’ which will exclude young mechanics should ever be adopted, and none such is necessary to the complete barring out of professionals. Amateur athletes have a common interest transcending social differences, and by keeping this in mind a great organization may be evolved which will do much for the physical culture and solidarity of civic feeling in Toronto (*The Globe*, 29 March 1887, 4).

Toronto’s reformers continued to view sport as an ideal “mechanism for packaging power and society in preferred ways” (Pope 1993, 334). Toronto’s moral entrepreneurs sought to select ‘legitimate’ sports, appropriate particular meanings of
amateurism, and worked diligently to institutionalize their sensibilities. While their understanding of amateurism was propagated by other agencies such as the Y.M.C.A. and the institutional church, it was with the founding of the M.A.A.A., that Toronto’s moral entrepreneurs had witnessed the formation of a powerful organizational structure upon which the promotion of amateurism could be based. Once again we find that emulation rather than invention was the strategy of choice in Toronto.

Within months of its 1886 inauguration the Toronto Athletic Club was celebrating sporting successes against competitors from across the country and south of the border. It was also contemplating the construction of a club house to rival those in New York, Boston and Montreal (The Globe, 5 November 1887, 7). It was not just on the playing fields that sport was a matter of civic pride.

**Protecting the amateur ideal**

The broad appeal of sport to Ontario’s communities at the turn of the twentieth century was obvious with “villages, towns and cities, school boards and universities, churches, YMCAs, police associations, private clubs and entrepreneurs” all seeking to “meet the burgeoning demands” (Kidd 1998, 157). The creation of municipal parks and playground departments lends credibility to the notion that public demand was taken seriously. On the matter of the use of public funds to construct and maintain facilities, however, the results were mixed, with larger cities such as Toronto more likely to dip into the public purse (Metcalfe 1983). But as Metcalfe (1983, 44) points out, the definition of the public in this context often translated into ratepayers, which “by no means constituted a majority of the population.” The intermingling of public, private and commercial interests ultimately shaped the number and type of sporting facilities as well
as the population that would use them. The answer to why some towns had more facilities than others, Metcalfe (1983, 44) claims, has everything to do with “the philosophies espoused by key individuals and groups” and their “calculated decisions.”

In Toronto, it was the commitment to amateurism by individuals such as John Ross Robertson (newspaper publisher), Francis Nelson (sportswriter), W.A. Hewitt (sportswriter), William Stark (police chief), Norton Clow (provincial treasury clerk) and James Merrick (corporate lawyer) that allowed Toronto to gain centrality in the development of the nation’s sporting culture (Kidd 1998). The preservation of the amateur ideal was put to the test most fully during Canada’s athletic war from 1906-1909. The specifics of the amateur war debate cannot be repeated here, but broadly outlined during the first decade of the twentieth century a power struggle for the control of amateur sport developed (Morrow 1986; Metcalfe 1995; Kidd 1998). At the root of the conflict was a heated debate over the meaning of amateurism between competing fractions from Montreal and Toronto. In blunt terms, Toronto, clinging to a more rigid definition of amateurism, challenged Montreal’s position as the “hotbed of Canadian sports” (Kidd 1998, 160). As the accusations amongst rival clubs and associations accumulated, the governance of the Canadian Amateur Athletic Union (C.A.A.U.) became unworkable. In a bold move, the M.A.A.A. broke away from the Canadian Amateur Athletic Union (CAAU) and formed the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Canada (AAF). At stake was the national control of sport and each side sought to claim jurisdiction over the various athletic sports and athletes.

It was the staging of the 1908 Olympic Games in London, England that finally brought an end to the conflict. While the creation of Canada’s first national Olympic
committee initially provided a reprieve for the competing factions, the tension between
the two ideologically opposed groups could not be contained. When the AAF backed the
American Amateur Athletics Association Union’s claim that Canadian athlete, Tom
Longboat, should be prevented from participating in the Olympics, tempers flared. The
incident, along with other developments in international politics (i.e. the Alaskan
Boundary Dispute) served to cast the Toronto-led Canadian Amateur Athletic
Association as champions of a “potent Canadianism”, with the Montreal based AAF
accused of being a puppet to American interests (Kidd 1998). The result was that “public
opinion turned bitterly against … the AAF” and Toronto’s sporting officials gained “the
backing of the sporting public” (Kidd 1998, 161). As we learned in Chapter Three, “he
who captures the symbols by which the public feeling is for the moment contained,
controls by that much the approaches of public policy” (Lippmann 1997[1922], 133). The
Toronto based, “gospel of order”, with its belief rooted in the educative potential of sport
and bolstered by the galvanizing influence of the Olympic symbol, set the foundations of
the Canadian sport system (Kidd 1998, 163).

Conclusion

In the aftermath of the “amateur war” and the 1908 Olympics, the code of
amateurism rigourously defended by Toronto’s cast of sport leaders had emerged
victorious. The result was a selection of key Toronto figures to prominent positions in
national sport organizations such as the Canadian Olympic Association and the Amateur
Athletic Union of Canada (Kidd 1998). In addition, Toronto’s moral entrepreneurs had
found a powerful symbol upon which to promote and perpetuate their moral agenda: the
Olympic Games. Put bluntly, the Olympic Games provided the “prominent public forum”
(Dyreson 1992, 73) through which sport reformers could continue to lay claim to “the legitimate definition of sporting practice and the legitimate functioning of sporting activity” (Bourdieu 1978, 826). As we shall see in Chapter Five, however, part of the power of the Olympic symbol is linked to its malleability. In particular, the code of amateurism that characterized the Olympics at the beginning of the twentieth century has waned considerably as new interests have shaped the meaning of the Olympic Games. Nevertheless, the strong linkage between the development of Toronto’s local sport culture to the values of Olympism (discussed in the next chapter) means that when the meanings and values of the Olympic symbol are challenged, we have the opportunity to reflect on the role of sport in the city’s public culture. As we saw in Chapter Two, debates over the meaning of symbols are crucial in the production of representations that govern our everyday lives.
Chapter 5. The symbolic importance of Olympism and the Olympic Games

It would be a stretch to argue that the philosophy of amateurism won the hearts and minds of Toronto’s citizenry in the first decades of the twentieth century. The performance of professional athletes and the increased commercialization of spectator sport could just as easily claim popular appeal. In the previous chapter, I illustrated that spectator sport was a critical part of a new urban entertainment industry, joining vaudeville, the movie house and the theater as a popular form of leisure. We found that watching a sporting contest could serve as a useful safety valve for city dwellers seeking to escape their urban conditions. At the same time, it was noted that being part of an audience also had the potential to put people into contact with strangers. From this perspective the sporting spectacle could serve as an important public space. On the other hand, the increased professionalism and commercialism of sporting spectacles had the potential to make “spectators of too many people” and replace active participation with
“passive observation” (Somers 1971, 134-135). For mid-twentieth century critics such as James C. Charlesworth, the rise of mass spectatorship posed:

a dark threat to American democracy, for, if people are trained to sit and watch professionals in sport and other leisure activities, they will also sit and watch some ambitious busy-bodies take their government away from them and operate it. (Charlesworth quoted in Somers 1971, 135)

For Mark Dyreson (1989, 262), spectatorship, not just in terms of live attendance, but also through reading about athletic activities in newspapers and magazines and listening to them on radio broadcasts, “marked one of the new sets of behaviors which knit the nation together into a mass society.” From an Arendtian perspective, this behaviour must be read as troublesome, for it is precisely this style of conformity that signals the triumph of the social over the political in the public sphere. Lewis Mumford (1938, 250) captures the uneasy tension between sport as sociability or spectacle arguing:

Fifty thousand people gathered in a single place can do fewer things together than twenty-five groups of two thousand: their chief function is limited to being there and saying Hurrah! or Heil! at the right moment.

That is why dictators love crowds and seek to provide bigger arenas and auditoriums for them: the bigger the crowd, the emptier their function.

The choice between “vicarious exercise” or “none at all” is a process that must be considered “growth by civic depletion” argues Mumford (1938, 250). According to Mumford (1938, 250), it is troubling to find that “[f]orty-five thousand people may attend a baseball game: but not even Chicago could boast the twenty-five hundred diamonds that would be necessary if each spectator claimed the right to play.”
Numerous sport historians share Mumford’s concern that spectator sport functions as an opiate for the masses. At the same time recent scholarship has indicated that we need to challenge the singularity of such opinions. For example, Holly Swyers (2005) has demonstrated that thinking about who owns Wrigley Field in Chicago can produce radically different assessments. Much like Walter Firey’s work on sentiment and symbolism, as well as the work on the street by Goheen (1998) and Mitchell (2000; 2003), Swyers (2005, 1089) nicely shows how Wrigley Field, a baseball park, is a site where “[t]he community as a whole comes together, ritually renewing ties that in some cases extend back decades.” Wrigley Field has become an “anchor point for the community, and this contributes to the moral economy of regulars” (Swyers 2005, 1089). Ownership, Swyers (2005) notes, is about more than the legal definitions of property. In her estimation Wrigley is a distinct social space and people sitting in the bleachers have the capacity to develop a community consciousness (Swyers 2005). The reason why they are community, Swyers (2005, 1087) argues, is because they “believe themselves to be a community.” It is not the utterances of hurray and heil that are important for Swyers, rather it is the way the experiences at Wrigley extend well beyond game day and get “woven into the life stories of regulars” (Swyers 2005, 1089). For Swyers (2005, 1089) “[m]emories are shared and fixed upon the geography of the ballpark in ways that make them collective property of a special sort.” Michael Borer’s (2006) examination of Fenway Park in Boston arrives at a similar conclusion. He argues that the symbolic importance of Fenway is rooted in its ability to reach beyond an economic imperative and lodge itself in the collective psyche of the citizenry. As Borer (2006, 221) aptly summarizes, “Fenway Park helps people tell Boston’s story.” What is important, he
writes, is that Fenway has become “a symbol that signifies the culture of an entire city” (Borer 2006, 206). More than simply a place on a geographical map, Fenway occupies a place on “Boston’s collective cognitive map” (Borer 2006, 219). In Borer’s opinion we must view Red Sox nation as far more than a geographical location. Both of these examples challenge the view that ball parks (or stadiums) are simply containers for consumerism.

The potential for a ball park to act as a public space resonates soundly with the perspective adopted by Zukin (1995) and Goheen (1998) explained in Chapter Three. We might recall that for these authors, public perception and public judgment are crucial to determining the value of urban public places. In the tradition of Habermas, Dewey and Goheen, definitions of what is considered “desirable” and “acceptable” by the public(s) remain central to determining what counts as public space. From this perspective, the more interesting question that Mumford (1938) raises is: what if the audience at the baseball game all demanded a right to play? In the last chapter I outlined that viewing sport for pleasure does not require the flexing of muscles that many reformers saw as one of the principle benefits of sport. I demonstrated that the rise of organized sport in Toronto was linked to the emergence of an urban middle class, a portion of which used a philosophy of amateurism to shape the city’s sporting culture. Similar to the development of amateur associations in the United States and in Britain, sportsmen in Montreal and Toronto (and other locales) created clubs and associations to facilitate participation and competition.

Toronto’s sport reformers claimed to be acting in the public interest. Returning to Habermas (1989, 37) from Chapter Three we find that they did not equate themselves as
“the public”, instead they “claimed to act as its mouthpiece, in its name, perhaps even as its educator—the new form of bourgeois representation.” In opposition to the derelict qualities of professional sport (i.e. violence, gambling, prize money) the men who took charge of organizing amateur sport in Toronto assumed the roles of moral entrepreneurs, preaching the benefits of participation for the betterment of body and mind. They rejected the creation of specialized athletes (competing in only one sport) and stressed the benefits of versatility. They further rejected the idea that sport should be used solely for economic gain and celebrated acts of modesty and fair play. Drawing on a view of amateurism invented by the English and popularized in American colleges, Toronto’s moral entrepreneurs touted the benefits of open sporting competitions while simultaneously sponsoring a definition of amateurism that was restrictive. Through linking a moral purpose to sport (i.e. healthful recreation, social mobility, self-improvement) they “legitimized certain beliefs, values, institutions, and social relationships” (Pope 1996, 302). The adherence to a strict definition of amateurism allowed them to institutionalize social and class prejudice. As Pope (1996, 303) has summarized:

> [a]mateurism provided a needed class presence and ideology for a rising generation of middle-class sport leaders. It was no coincidence, then, that the institutions (academe and private athletic clubs), the individuals (educated, socially mobile white males), and messages (meritocracy, fair play, respectability) of the amateur movement reflected similar vestiges of middle-class identification.

In general terms, the adherence to amateurism was an attempt by Toronto’s “middle classes to regulate and reform the uses and meaning of leisure time among ‘the people’”
The point of the last chapter was not to suggest that sport was unavailable to different classes and different ethnicities. On the contrary, participatory sport was popular amongst Toronto’s populace. A variety of sporting activities allowed individuals and groups to work out relationships and establish identities. What I argued was that the influence of a particular class on the formation of organized sport cannot be ignored. The competition of particular sports, with acknowledged rules, in select spaces, with specific competitors, was result of this influence.

I ended the last chapter by noting that growing popularity of professional sport at the municipal level challenged the intentions of those who preached the amateur ethos. I further noted that it was the revival of the Olympic Games, built on a strict amateur code and with their appeal to nationalist sentiments that helped to prolong the life of the reformers’ moral authority.

In this chapter I trace the power of the Olympic symbol. I begin by examining the roots of Pierre de Coubertin’s philosophy of Olympism, a vision that was committed to educational reform, amateurism and internationalism. I then examine three critical framers of the symbolism of the Olympic Games in Canada: (1) the International Olympic Committee (IOC); (2) the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC); and (3) the federal government. In Part II, I will explore the relationships these stakeholders had with the City of Toronto and the Toronto’s Olympic bid team during the bidding for the 2008 Summer Olympics. I end this chapter by illustrating that the malleability of the Olympic symbol makes it extremely important. The forthcoming chapters will demonstrate how this symbol is relevant to the production of public space in Toronto.
The Reviving of the Olympic Games

Oh! The great need to rest that France had after this long outburst of courage, and great heavens! how well one understands that France should go and play dominoes instead of exercising its tired muscles. Sated with victory, France gradually fell asleep while, beside its black, total, horrible defeat had awakened energies which laboured grimly at the undertaking that you know: the German empire.

(Pierre Coubertin quoted in Müller 2000, 288, italics added)

French aristocrat, Baron Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937), is widely regarded as having founded the modern Olympic Games. Although scholars emphasize that the idea to restore the games was not an individual pursuit\(^\text{18}\), there is general agreement that without the dedication and tenacity of Coubertin, the modern Olympic Games would not have succeeded. In his biography of Coubertin, John MacAloon (1981) argues that Coubertin linked France’s military defeats during the Franco-Prussian war and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to the country’s poor education in sports. Tracing Coubertin’s interest in English values of chivalry and sportsmanship, and outlining his fascination with Frédéric Le Play and Thomas Arnold, MacAloon (1981) explains that Coubertin believed that France’s military and cultural status could be improved through the masculinity, discipline and precision created through physical education. At the same time, Coubertin believed that if France’s youth could be instilled with a competitive spirit fostered through sport, then her glory would be regained.

\(^{18}\) Numerous attempts to revitalize the Olympic Games occurred prior to Coubertin’s successful invention. For example, J.K. Rühl (1997) has outlined the performance of thirteen “Olympic Games” including the Montreal Olympic Games in 1844 and the more commonly referenced Greek Olympics of 1859, 1870, 1875, 1889 as having been staged prior to the Coubertin inspired revival. For an account of the pre-Coubertinian Olympics and an explanation of the significance of the efforts of William Penny Brookes (1809-1895) to the revival see Young (1987).
Having been trained at a private Jesuit School (Collège Saint-Ignace) that emphasized the benefits of philosophy and languages but neglected the study of natural sciences and physical education, Coubertin felt that his education was overly intellectual. He complained along with numerous other Republican critics that the French education system was “unproductive, undemocratic, and irrelevant to the social and moral progress of their modern nation” (Brown 1997, 32). The focus on formal methods, he thought was not appropriate for the shift towards a democratic government. Drawing inspiration from important educational reformers such as Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893), Jules Simon (1814-1896) and Pierre Guillaume Frédéric Le Play (1806-1882), Coubertin learned to equate the education of the masses to the production of social harmony (Brown 1997).

Through extensive travel in Britain, America and Canada, Coubertin studied various physical education programs and contemplated their utility to French educational reform (Chatzieflathiou 2005). In Britain, he witnessed first-hand how “muscles are made to do the same work as a moral educator” (quoted in Loland 1995, 56). The link between sport and religion espoused by the Muscular Christians as well as their desire to replicate a Greek ideal meshed nicely with Coubertin’s (and the wider European) interest in philhellenism (Chatzieflathiou (2005). Inspired by the competitiveness of the English form of athleticism and drawing connections between English sporting culture and imperialistic dominance, Coubertin found a system to emulate (Chatzieflathiou 2005). “It is always useful to study one’s neighbor, even if that neighbor is an adversary, for by imitating the good in him, one can correct it and do even better” (Coubertin 1888 printed in Müller 2000, 53). The result, Peter Gay (1993, 442) has noted, was that Tom Brown’s Schooldays became “Coubertin’s bible” and the character building potential of English
sport formed one of the critical foundations of his Olympism. He became “a confirmed Anglomaniac” (Weber 1970, 6).

As an educator, Coubertin saw the value of sport to both body and mind. At the same time, he admired how the formation of student run organizations and clubs in the English system made the participants conscious of their rights and responsibilities and introduced them to key democratic principles such as opinion formation, voting, electing representatives, and the recognition of authority. Sport forced students to make decisions, to take initiative and in doing so, gain self-knowledge. In short, he found in the English school system a sense of freedom that was lacking in France—in his own education.

Although driven by a deep sense of patriotism, and convinced that athletics could help “reduce conflict within the French body politic” as well as the “conflict between nations” (Hoberman 1986, 33), Coubertin was astute enough to recognize he could not revitalize the Olympics as a nationalist project (Loland 1995). His goal of revitalizing the French body politic would demand that he cultivate an educational, athletic and moral philosophy that would appeal to an international community. Drawing upon the existing fascination with ancient Greece and the classical roots of western culture, Coubertin teased out particular qualities from the ancient Olympics (civic pride, religion, ideals of art, patriotism) and grafted them onto his current project. This scripting, Keys (2006, 31) argues, “gave Coubertin’s plan an aura of tradition and an ostensible link to a heroic past for what was otherwise a purely modern invention.” While Coubertin understood the power of ceremony and the utility of symbolic aspects of the ancient Olympics, he also recognized the potential of the fin de siècle internationalism that had emerged in the form

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19 The archeological digs at Olympia between 1875-1881 had generated a wave of enthusiasm across Europe (Müller 2000; Loland 1995).
of international peace movements (Quanz 1993), the phenomenal growth of international organizations (Hoiberman 1995), as well as the staging of World Exhibitions (Roche 2000). Dryeson (1998, 22) explains that Coubertin was simultaneously grappling with the pressures of tradition and the forces of modernity noting that the Frenchman “was a stalwart member of the late nineteenth-century French Right, a loyalist to the army and the Church; yet he did not want France to devolve toward the *ancient regime* but instead to progress toward a republican future invigorated by industrial progress and urban power.” The result, Dryeson (1998, 22) claims was that Coubertin developed the Olympic Games as a “middle way” with “a modern international army of cosmopolitan athletes united by traditional chivalric honor.”

Coubertin first publicly expressed his idea of reviving the Olympic Games during a lecture given at the Sorbonne in 1892. It was here that he spoke the words that opened this section, informing his audience that France had fallen asleep in 1866 and in 1870 having fallen victim not to the German schoolmaster but to its gymnastics master. He spoke passionately about the values of the English athletic system and of the rapid diffusion of physical education across the world. He claimed that modern athletics had become both democratic and international. He ended his lecture by suggesting that while athletics might simply be understood as suitable preparation for war, they should be considered an investment in peace:

> [t]here are people whom you call utopians when they talk to you about the disappearance of war, and you are not altogether wrong; but there are others who believe in the progressive reduction in the chances of war, and I see no utopia in this. It is clear that the telegraph, railways, the telephone,
the passionate research in science, congresses and exhibitions have done more for peace than any treaty or diplomatic convention. Well, I hope that athletics will do even more. Those who have seen 30,000 people running through the rain to attend a football match will not think that I am exaggerating. Let us export rowers, runners and fencers; there is the free trade of the future, and on the day when it is introduced within the walls of old Europe the cause of peace will have received a new and mighty stay.

(Coubertin 1892 printed in Müller 2000, 297).

The restoration of the Olympic Games, he proposed, would be central to the athletic path to peace. John Lucas (1988, 92) has noted that Coubertin’s speech “was met with great applause and an abysmal lack of understanding.” Reflecting on the situation nearly forty years later, Coubertin (Coubertin printed in Müller 2000, 313) explained that his idea “went by without the idea causing any stir among the general public” and when people did contemplate the idea it was “the notion of a hippodrome-type spectacle that was uppermost in the person’s mind.” Still, Coubertin remained undeterred.

While Coubertin’s early attempt to internationalize amateur sport had proven to be too ambitious, his campaign to expand athletic training in France had been more successful. He developed close allies in the persons of Octave Gréard (Vice-Rector of the Académie de Paris) and Jules Simon (Minister of Public Instruction) and he used these contacts to expand the presence of English sports in French lycées and to orchestrate the founding of the Union des Sociétés Françaises des Sports Athlétiques (USFSA)\textsuperscript{20} in 1889.

\textsuperscript{20} This can be considered the French equivalent of the Montreal Amateur Athletic Association (M.A.A.A.) inspired creation of the Canadian Amateur Athletic Union (C.A.A.U.) discussed in the previous chapter.
The formation of the USFSA quickly became a rival institution to the Ligue Nationale de l’Education Physique, run by a strict nationalist, Paschal Grousset. Both the USFSA and the Ligue campaigned for the introduction of physical education to the French school system, but Coubertin had a narrower focus, concentrating on building manly character at the secondary school level. Far from the international cosmopolitanism that Coubertin espoused, Grousset “support[ed] the notion of sport in schools, but condemn[ed] the importation of English games” arguing that the “French would do better to seek their models in antiquity rather than across the Channel” (Weber 1971, 11). In contrast, the USFSA was an anglophile institution, run by the “graduates of the smart Parisian lycées for the most part” who “were careful to encourage ‘fair play’ and amateurism, and not to infuse sport with too openly a nationalistic programme” (Holt 1995, 42). As with the development of amateur athletic associations in Britain and overseas, the USFSA provided bureaucratic guidance establishing rules and developing regional committees. They also “barred all but amateurs from its membership” (Weber 1971, 86).

It was at a planned congress for the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the USFSA (in 1894) that Coubertin cautiously and famously inserted his Olympic aspirations onto the agenda and triggered a movement that would fully alter the practice of sport world-wide. The congress was originally designed to address the heated issues of amateurism, but as Lucas (1988, 93) claims, it should be understood as “The Great Camouflage” because over the course of a ten month period Coubertin steadily altered the program to address the question of developing a neo-Olympics. It was an act of deception (or the strategic move of a keen opportunist) that Coubertin (Coubertin 1896 21 Paschal Grousset was also known as Philippe Daryl.)
printed in Müller 2000, 310) conceded in 1896 when he wrote: “The Programme for the Congress was drawn up in such a way as to disguise its main objective: the revival of the Olympic Games.” Coubertin admits to having slowly altered the program while simultaneously broadening its list of invited guests. While the final number of seventy-nine delegates may not seem impressive—we must consider the cost of travel that was involved—the diversity of the group was remarkable: forty-nine sport associations and twelve countries were represented (Seagrave and Chu 1988). The presence of individuals such as C. Herbert (representing Amateur Athletic Association in London) and W.M. Slone (representing the New York Athletic Club), both of whom shared Coubertin’s passion, helped to develop a critical mass of supporters.

Writing in a self-congratulatory tone, Coubertin explains that his cleverness was not limited to the design: “I insisted on our meetings taking place in the Halls of the Sorbonne…It seemed to me that under the venerable roof of the Sorbonne the words “Olympic Games” would resound more impressively and more persuasively on the audience” (Coubertin 1896 printed in Müller 2000, 311). To complete the propagation, Coubertin invited a selection of Majesties and Royal Highnesses, Princes, Dukes, ambassadors and other distinguished guest and “projected a series of festivities to make their stay agreeable and attractive” (Coubertin 1896 printed in Müller 2000, 311). With the right choral performance (Hymn to Apollo) and the appropriate artistry (including Puvis De Chavannes’ Sacred Copse), Coubertin (Coubertin printed in Müller 2000, 311) claimed that “Hellenism infiltrated into the whole vast hall” and that a “subtle feeling of emotion spread through the auditorium as if the ancient eurhythmy were coming to us

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22 In his Olympic Memoirs Coubertin referred to the Congress of 1894 as an “invaluable screen” (see Müller 2000, 315).
from the distant past.” It was a strategy that worked. The attendees of the congress unanimously agreed to restore the Olympic Games and to establish a permanent International Olympic Committee (IOC)—a committee that was hand chosen by Coubertin. The power granted to the IOC was absolute as the delegates concluded that IOC members would act as representatives of the idea of Olympism and not function as representatives of their individual countries.

In the aftermath of the Congress at Sorbonne, we find that Coubertin had managed to successfully revitalize the Olympic Games. Coubertin’s proposal to solve the tensions between the quarreling sport associations and federations—who “often seek to injure one another” or “to steal away each other’s champions” by offering them a “regulator”, as the Greeks had at Olympia—was finally realized (Coubertin in Müller 2000, 543). While Coubertin’s dream of re-establishing an international sporting competition had been forged, his larger goal of Olympism remained unsettled. In essence he had created a bureaucratic structure (the IOC) and an occasion (the Olympic Games) that had begun to determine who had a right to play, but he struggled to get others to understand the wider benefits of Olympism. Reflecting on the first Olympiad in Athens 1896, Coubertin (printed in Müller 2000, 369) commented, “[i]n Athens, all efforts had been concentrated on the sporting side of the venture in an historical context; there had been no congress, no conference, no sign of any moral or educational purpose.” The attitude that sport was simply a form of recreation continued to plague the Paris Olympics of 1900. The politicians remained indifferent, viewing sport “as quite unimportant, only to be appreciated to a minor degree like any other healthy amusement” (Coubertin printed in Müller 2000, 394). Olympism, he notes, was considered “a totally superfluous,
eccentric neologism.” Held in the shadows of the World Exhibition, Coubertin (printed in Müller 2000, 394) felt that there “was nothing Olympic about them.”

To counteract the prevailing ambivalence towards the Olympics, Coubertin turned to the press. Douglas Brown (1997, 85) has usefully outlined Coubertin’s keen recognition of the importance of self-promotion and the power of the press and argues that Coubertin “knew the significance of the ‘new magazine’, or review, and employed it strategically to defend and promote the Modern Olympic Movement.” Coubertin believed that his philosophy of Olympism simply needed to be disseminated.

Through fostering relationships with men from the publishing industry as well as developing the IOC’s Revue Olympique, Coubertin’s philosophy of Olympism was “transformed from a relatively private, administrative-type discourse to a much broader public, ideological-type, discourse” (Brown 1997, 85). For example, the British daily sport paper, The Sporting Life, tackled the issue of how to define amateurism on behalf of the IOC while asserting the IOC’s ultimate authority on the matter. In addition, Brown (1997, 91) explains that “two of the first three American IOC members [Casper Whitney and William Sloane] were professional journalists.” It was in sources such as Harper’s, American Sportsmen Library, Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine as well as newspapers such as the New York Tribune that the American public was informed of the Olympic movement (Brown 1997). Closer to home, Coubertin frequently published articles in Revue Pour les Français to complement those printed in the Revue Olympique. By allying the Revue Olympique with popular sport and more general periodicals Coubertin had found “not only an efficient means of spreading the gospel of Olympism around the world” but also “an efficient method of communicating among existing and
potential IOC members” (Brown 1997, 90). Coubertin’s propaganda strategy ultimately suffered from one fatal flaw; he was unable to relinquish control. His “dominant role as editor and primary contributor” of the *Revue Olympique* prevented it from “functioning as a truly open conduit for cultural discourse” (Brown 2001, 101). Coubertin had ensured that the *Revue Olympique* remained an elitist publication that was designed and distributed to a select readership and published with the intent of inciting “action among an elite corp of sportsmen and educators” (Brown 1997, 107). His attempt to retain ideological control while simultaneously trying to popularize Olympism proved problematic. The result, Brown (1997, 109) concludes, was that,

[i]n the grander scheme of Courbertin's modern sporting movement, the Olympic Games, were conceived as the ultimate symbol of Olympism. Unfortunately, direct access to this symbol was restricted to a very small portion of the entire international population that Coubertin hoped to infect with the values and beliefs of Olympism.

A thorough examination of Courbertin’s writings reveals that the nobleman’s vision for the Olympics was full of verve, but lacked precision (Müller 2000). It is possible to peck out Courbertin’s particular ideas about the Olympic Games, such as: (1) that they should be ambulatory; (2) that they provide the opportunity for masses of people ordinarily socially distant to come together; (3) that they use sport to cultivate and educate; (4) that they should contribute to mutual understanding; and (5) that they should be divorced from politics (Müller 2000; Loland 1995). In “The Philosophic Foundation of Modern Olympism” (1935), perhaps Courbertin’s most clear expression of Olympism, he was careful to point out that it was a religion and an aristocracy and was supported by
values such as chivalry and truce. Coubertin emphasized that the rhythm (the Olympiad) of the Olympics was important because it honoured new generations. He also claimed that the true Olympic hero was the individual adult male who pursued sport in the interests of self-mastery and the beauty of achievement. Yet, Coubertin never fully outlined how to obtain his cherished ideals. In addition, his vision of Olympism evolved as the Olympic Games grew in importance. Nevertheless his vision continues to have resonance in several of the fundamental principles in the Olympic Charter (IOC 2007, 11):

1 Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.

2 The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.

Loland (1995) has argued that Coubertin’s Olympism is built upon four main goals. First, it is based on the belief that the education of the body is central to the cultivation of the individual. If sport could educate the individual then it stands to reason that it might contain important lessons for the development of relationships between men. This rationale—expanding according to the logic of a pyramid—continues to jump scales to include larger social groups and increased cultural exchange. As Olympism expands, it continues to aid in the development of relations between societies and nations. Finally,
through participating in a shared international sporting event, Coubertin envisioned Olympism as the foundation to a peaceful internationalism. As Loland (1995, 66) summarizes, Coubertin believed that: “[t]he ‘new aristocracy’ of top level athletes could serve as ideals for the masses and as a motivating force to more sport activity and thus moral development of individuals in all layers of society.” While the stadium would be the pinnacle of sporting environments, countless schoolyards, playgrounds and gymnasiums would be built to encourage and support the pursuit of athletic excellence and harmonious development. As the principle symbolic expression of this belief, Loland (1995, 66) explains that the Olympics are the “most important cult in what Coubertin called a *religio athletae*, ‘a philosophico-religious doctrine,’ a new humanistic religion for the 20th Century.”

The Defense of Amateurism: Olympism Reconsidered

Sensible democracy, wise and peaceful internationalism will penetrate the new stadia and will maintain the cult of honour and disinterestedness that will allow athleticism to become an oeuvre of moral and peaceful society while at the same time promoting muscular development.

(Pierre de Coubertin quoted in Brown 1997, 101)

Coubertin’s philosophy of Olympism remains an unrealized ideal. A sizable body of scholarship has been dedicated to demonstrating the failings of Olympism. For example, Coubertin’s particular understanding of athleticism waned with the onset of
World War I. The safety-valve mechanism of sport lost its cultural valence as the ideology of fair play failed on the battlefields of Europe. The construction of stadiums and gymnasiums and other urban playing fields had proven incapable of channeling human energy into more noble pursuits. Conceived at a time of nation building, military organization and growing international exchange, we might say that the modern Olympics were destined to become something more than a sporting event. The Olympic maxim of citius, altius, fortius (faster, higher, stronger) can be interpreted in a number of ways, not the least of which is industrial and commercial dominance. Beginning in Athens (1896) and largely reflecting a Greek national festival, the Olympics slowly became international while simultaneously becoming “a forum for rising international animosity” (Eichberg 1990, 116). As I mentioned in the last chapter, when the Olympic idea was rejuvenated, “America’s athletic missionaries” were keen to participate (Dyreson 1992).

Richard Gruneau (2006) has drawn attention to the tendency of sport historians to examine and explain why the philosophy of amateurism has seemingly lost its capacity to guide contemporary sporting culture. A more thought provoking question Gruneau (2006, 575) suggests, is to consider: “why was the principle of amateurism able to become so influential and to last as long as it did?” He credits the revival of the Olympics Games as central to the longevity of the amateurism. The “growing popularity of the Olympics,” Gruneau (2006, 575) claims, “had the effect of elevating the promoters of amateur sport to an international monopoly position.” The fin de siècle revival of the Olympic Games provided a unique cultural context that allowed Olympic supporters to blend cultural modernism with “ideas from late Victorian romanticism.” The Olympics, Gruneau (2006,
argues, became a “powerful and intoxicating cultural brew” that mixed sport with art and poetry in a collective ritual that celebrated the performance of the athletic body in a way that “no form of sport in western life ever had in the past.” As a powerful symbol, the Olympics allowed a “moral entrepreneurial vision” to be linked to “a renewed aesthetic and ideological project” (Gruneau 2006, 576) and as a result they “had a remarkable capacity to appeal to both political progressives and reactionaries” (Gruneau 2006, 577). International sport was viewed to be a “positive cultural innovation” whose “universally-agreed upon rules” and emphasis on fair play could be transmitted to anyone seeking “to improve themselves” (Gruneau 2006, 577). At the same time, “the subordination of will and prowess to higher forms of national or racial purpose” satisfied the desire of reactionaries to have “older non-rational cultural themes” glorified (Gruneau 2006, 577). The Olympics became the symbol that allowed a “philosophy of amateurism” to be promoted as “a new kind of common sense” (Gruneau 2006, 577).

With the revival of the Olympics, the “symbolic representational power of modern sport was moved beyond the local realm of small town rivalries, cross-class or inter-ethnic and inter-racial conflicts, and into the international arena” (Gruneau 2006, 744). Far from solving the issue of amateurism we find that “the Olympics put new pressures on amateurism” (Gruneau 2006, 744). The nationalist urge for victory did not always mesh well with Coubertin’s desire to stimulate an impassioned mind in a well-trained body. As Dyreson (1992, 74) bluntly puts it, “Courbetin’s fine distinctions between nationalism and patriotism escaped American [and other nations.] sensibilities.” Hindsight allows us to comfortably claim that the Olympics have become a prime opportunity for countries to assert their national superiority. The massive
commercialization and continued nationalism of the Olympics has led some commentators to suggest that when it comes to the Olympics Games “[t]he best one can hope for is that the dream of human unity not be utterly lost in the frenzied affirmation of partial allegiances and fragmented identities” (Guttmann 1986, 7). But should we abandon Coubertin’s idealized Olympism?

In a rare attempt to defend the Coubertin’s Olympic internationalism, William Morgan (1994, 11) argues that it is imperative that we do not equate the inability to achieve the lofty ideals of Olympism as evidence that “those moral ideals themselves” are unworthy. Morgan (1994, 11) believes that Olympism can be thought of as a positive “moral force” because it can cause us to reflect upon and question the meaning of sincere or genuine internationalism. Morgan (1994, 13) reveals that Coubertin was interested in a style of cultural exchange that penetrated deeper than the usual visiting of foreign cities without “having left one’s own country.” He argues that Coubertin understood that tourist enclaves comprised of hotels and amusements made flaneurs out of “nomadic cosmopolitans” (Morgan 1994, 13) . Framed in an appropriate way, Coubertin believed that the Olympics could have far more educative and permanent effect. To achieve this goal, Morgan explains that Coubertin sponsored both true nationalism as well as sincere internationalism (Morgan 1994). True nationalism, as Coubertin understood it, meant that “patriots treat their love of country not as an abstraction … but as an exhortation, as a call to make it a better and richer place by bringing to its attention and possible edification the alternative forms of life of different cultures” (Morgan 1994, 14). What makes Coubertin unique, Morgan (1994) writes, was that he remained committed to the idea that the Olympic Games would be an opportunity for nations to foster mutual respect between
nations and not simply an occasion for nations to tolerate one another. It is on this basis that Morgan refers to Coubertin as a “maximalist internationalist” arguing that Coubertin was less interested in the locating and bracketing of shared values between nations than he was with developing “potentially more contentious conversational settings” (Morgan 1994, 15). The critical point, as Morgan (1994, 16) admirably summarizes, is that:

flourishing cultures are …cultures that respect other cultures for, not in spite of, their differences, that go about the often arduous task of understanding others by loading their own moral imaginations and epistemological stocks of beliefs with the images and beliefs of the cultures they study. This makes for a more robust peace, a more vibrant international order, because it makes the world safe for pluralism by encouraging its upsurge rather than pluralism safe for the world by encouraging its enervation.

Morgan (1994, 17) completes his thoughtful investigation by linking Coubertin’s Olympic internationalism to sport querying: “what special features do (international) sports possess that prompted Coubertin to think they could foster international harmony and solidarity?” Here Morgan identifies two features of sport that make a good vehicle for sincere internationalism or using the language of an earlier chapter, a powerful bastion of public life. First, sport allows for “impassioned soaring” or an “intensification of human experience”. Second, it is rule-bound competition which means that effort can be expended with specific and recognizable purposes.
Coubertin had correctly identified the “representational prowess of sports” (Morgan 1994, 18). Unlike other forms of cultural expression, sport captures the imagination so magnificently that for:

people who so strongly identify with sports it is not enough to just watch them, to observe casually their goings on and outcomes. Rather, it seems that they must insert themselves into the action itself; that they must submerge their own individual identities and social identity as a people into their athletic representatives…and when all goes right it makes for a powerful form of intercultural exchange. (Morgan 1994, 18)

Morgan (1994, 18) explains that Coubertin understood that the agonal aspect of sport had to be protected and claims that this is why the Frenchman favoured the competitive nature of English sport and why he did not try to “weaken their nationalist connections.” Instead he encouraged the process by turning the Olympics into a liminal time-out from everyday experience complete with rites of separation and aggregation through the deliberate use of rites and symbols. Reminding us of Clifford Geertz’s work on thick description and his famous analysis of the Balinesse cockfight, Morgan (1994, 20) proposes that “sports do just what defenders of highfalutin discourse claim they cannot do: provide rich and dramatic occasions for people to tell stories about themselves.” In Morgan’s (1994) estimation the difficulty with the Olympics does not reside in the fact that the ideals of Olympism have never been realized, nor that they are reflective of Western moral ideals. Instead, he claims the true fault of the Olympic Games rest in the series of evictions that has characterized the IOC as well as the rigidity of a sporting
program that is fully Western (Morgan 1994). In essence he criticizes the framers of the Olympic symbol.

**The International Olympic Committee (IOC): Structure and Organization**

Coubertin (in Müller 2000, 322) once described the IOC in the following way:

- a committee composed of three concentric circles; a small *nucleus* of dedicated active members; a *nursery* of willing members capable of being educated along the right lines; and finally, a *façade* of people of varying degrees of usefulness, whose presence would serve to satisfy national pretensions while lending prestige to the whole.

It is a model and an explanation that continues to have contemporary relevance.

The IOC “is an international non-governmental non-profit organization, of unlimited duration, in the form of an association with the status of a legal person, recognized by the Swiss Federal Council” (IOC 2007, see Rule 15.1). The IOC establishes and manages the rules for both the organization of and participation in the Olympic Games. Specifically the Olympic Charter outlines “three main constituents” (the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Sports Federations (IFs), and the National Olympic Committees (NOCs). In addition, to these three major constituents the Olympic Charter includes: Organizing Committees of the Olympic Games (OCOGs), national associations, clubs, persons belonging to the IFs and NOCs (i.e. athletes), judges, referees, coaches and other sport officials and technicians as well as other organizations.
and institutions recognized by the IOC (i.e. sponsors, suppliers and media) (IOC 2004). The IOC depicts the organization of the Olympic Movement in following manner.

![Organizational structure of the International Olympic Association](http://www.olympic.org/uk/organisation/movement/index_uk.asp)

**Figure 5.1. Organizational structure of the International Olympic Association** (adopted from http://www.olympic.org/uk/organisation/movement/index_uk.asp).

From Figure 5.1, it is clear that the ‘universe’ of the IOC is quite extensive, with a governance structure and multinational funding bodies, and ranging from employees to participants, from having a home base (in Lausanne since 1915) to representation in every National Olympic Committee (NOC). Simply put, the IOC does have global influence.

Historically, the IOC has used a co-option model to fill its membership. The challenges of this cooption strategy have been recognized since the earliest days of the IOC. In the words of Coubertin:
We are not elected. We are self-recruiting, and our terms of office are unlimited. Is there anything else that could irritate public opinion more? Increasingly the public is used to seeing the principle of elections expand, gradually placing all institutions under its yoke. In our case, we are infringing against the general rule, a difficult thing to tolerate, isn’t it? Well we are delighted to take responsibility for this irregularity, and we are not in the least concerned about it.

I once learned a great many things in this country. Among them was that the best way to preserve freedom and to serve democracy is not always to abandon everything to elections, but rather to maintain islands in the great electoral ocean where the continuity of independent, stable effort can be guaranteed within certain narrowly-defined areas.

Independence and stability. These, Gentlemen, are what has made it possible for us to accomplish great things.


This independence remains entrenched in the fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter (IOC 2007, see Rule 16).

The Olympic Charter (IOC 2007, see Rule 16 1.2) outlines that “[t]he IOC recruits and elects its members from among such eligible persons as it considers qualified [subject to a number of bylaws].” This has meant that a sizable number of royalty, political and military leaders, nobles and ex-Olympians have contributed to the IOC’s membership over the last century. While some reformation has occurred in the last
decade, the organization remains mostly men. As late as 1980, there were no women members of the IOC (Davenport 1996). The IOC is frequently framed as “a self-perpetuating circle of individuals isolated from external accountability and influential in decisions of significant public importance” (Aram 2000, 71). It is critical to understand that “[t]he members of the Committee are not delegates of their countries’ athletic federations to the Olympic institution. To the contrary, they are representatives of that institution to the federations in their countries, its ambassadors in a sense” (Müller 2000, 664). The Olympic Charter grants IOC members significant powers within their respective National Olympic Committees (NOCs) including voting privileges and outlines that any Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG) must include the IOC member(s) from that country. The design is supposed to insulate IOC members from the national and local politics as well as to give it the stability that Coubertin mentions above. As a result, we find the IOC as the trustee of the Olympic idea is “neither fully corporate or nationalistic” (Miller et al. 1999, 25). As Schneider (2000) has opined, it is reasonable to think of the Olympic Movement as a public trust responsible for the promotion and maintenance of the ideals of Olympism. The problem with this arrangement, as I have indicated above, is that Coubertin failed to clarify a workable moral doctrine for his IOC colleagues, a situation that a century’s worth of delegates have not sought to remedy (Hoberman 1986).

**The Canadian Olympic Committee (COC)**

In the last chapter I argued that it was the staging of the 1908 Olympic Games in London, England that allowed Toronto’s moral entrepreneurs to seize upon a “potent
Canadianism” to advance a particular understanding of amateurism. Prior to this date, Canada was not officially represented at the Olympic Games, although Canadians did compete individually. In the lead up to the London Olympics, however, the Canadian Amateur Athletic Union, following the lead of the Great Britain and the United States, established a temporary Canadian Olympic Committee which became responsible for sending a representative team. The disagreement on the amateur status of Tom Longboat between officials from Montreal and Toronto provided an opportunity for the Ontarians to insert a greater influence on the development of the Canadian sport system. By linking “amateurism to Canadian nationalism” Toronto’s (and Ontario’s) sport reformers had gained “a clear field to pursue its agenda of Canadian sports development, the backing of the sporting public to do so, and the initial resources (from membership fees) to undertake it” (Kidd 1998, 161). The result, Kidd (1998) explains was that Toronto’s sport reformers’ view of amateurism spread across the country. By 1914, there were more than 1300 clubs across the nation operating under the guidance of the Toronto-led Amateur Athletic Union (Kidd 1998). The goal of the Ontario leadership, Kidd (1998, 162) asserts, was “an east-west sports system which would harness sports to the challenges of nation-building.” Through the establishment of local and national championships (i.e. the Canada Games), they helped establish a platform for demonstrating athletic skill. The formation of the British Empire Games (now the Commonwealth Games) along with the quadrennial pattern of the Olympic Games provided opportunities for local pride to jump scales and metamorphose into Canadian pride. In addition, the staging of the British Empire Games in Hamilton (1930) introduced sporting officials to the benefits of holding large scale athletic events such as the provision of massive volunteerism, increased
program dollars for amateur sport and considerable infrastructure improvements (Kidd 1998).

As the Olympic Games gained prestige, however, there was reluctance on the part of the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada to release the Canadian Olympic Committee from its bureaucratic grip. Systemic discrimination against the working class, women, immigrants and members of the First Nations in the Canadian sport system had forced many to seek more liberal definitions of amateurism (Kidd 2006). The result was severing of ties between numerous sport federations associations and the Amateur Athletic Union. Meanwhile, those Muscular Christians who continued to adhere to Coubertin’s pedagogical view were challenged by the increased popularity of professional sports as well as the strident nationalism of successive Olympic Games. Each staging of the Olympics revealed that the amateur code was unenforceable. Broken time payments, gifts that would be later pawned for cash, and under-the-table transfers of money were commonly employed to ensure medal success. Coubertin realized that the “pristine athletic code of amateurism” prevented many poor athletes from participating, but he also believed that the “lust for money” would tarnish Olympism (Lucas 1988, 67). As Lucas (1988, 67) explains, Coubertin was trapped: “[r]ight from the beginning Coubertin recognized the ambivalence; right to the end he was unable to settle the unstable ideological ship.” With Coubertin unable to solve the conundrum, the Olympics continued to operate according to a strict definition of amateurism. This meant that the Olympics continued to confer legitimacy to the amateur movement, and as a result the Amateur Athletic Union’s control of the COC gave the union a powerful raison d’être.
It was not until 1952 that the COC finally became incorporated as a non-profit organization. Bruce Kidd (2006, 707) has noted that “Canadian amateurism lost considerable ground to commercial sport during the 1950s, a time that coincided with the decline of the Protestant churches and the social reform movements that resonated with them.” With the values of Muscular Christianity under threat, the COC—originally concerned with the basic financing, clothing and transportation of Olympic athletes—slowly began to lobby for a national fitness program that stressed the importance of participation and education. But as Coubertin had found out, the social valance of winning medals at the Olympic Games was a powerfully motivating national force that often overshadowed the more nuanced meanings of Olympism. With a nation interested in winning, the volunteer amateur sports governing bodies [i.e. the Amateur Athletic Union] were transformed into “state-driven and state-financed high-performance agencies” where podium results are publicized and utilized for the purposes of expressing “pan-Canadian unity” (Kidd 2006, 708). I provide more detail on the role of the federal government and the commitment to elite sport in the next section. For now, it is enough to recognize that the increased government involvement led the Amateur Athletic Union to disband in 1969 (Kidd 1998).

One of the objectives of the COC is to develop and protect the Olympic Movement in Canada in accordance with the Olympic Charter (Canadian Olympic Committee, 2006). Adhering to the guidelines set forth by the IOC’s Olympic Charter means that the COC cannot designate representatives of governments or public authorities to its committee. The lack of government seats is a deliberate attempt by the
IOC to separate Olympic sport from the state. As Michael Chambers (1998) speaking to the federal government’s Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada articulated,

The COA [now COC] is independent of government. It is sometimes perceived by the public to be part of the government because it has such a national prominence, particularly at the time of the Olympic Games…It receives about 2% of its revenue from government, not by direct grant but by a contractually negotiated sponsorship agreement between the federal government, through Sport Canada, and the COA.

Recognizing that the Canadian Olympic Committee is almost entirely privately funded is meaningful for at least two reasons. First, it dislodges the popular idea that the Canadian Olympic Association/Committee is a government agency. Second, it reveals just how little is known about sport delivery and funding in the country and about the COC in particular. According to Carol Anne Letheren (1997) many Canadians are surprised when they learn that the COC does not fund grassroots development. The COC still aims to increase the level of interest of sport in the country, to contribute to the spread of Olympism through culture and education as well as athletics, and to provide financial assistance if possible, but it caters to athletes who demonstrate Olympic potential. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that the COC is “obliged by the Olympic Charter to send and enter athletes in the Games of the Olympiad” (Canadian Olympic Committee, 2006, 1)

While the funding arrangements of the COC may offer surprises, clearer is the role of the COC in the designation of “which city, if any, may apply to organize Olympic Games or Pan American Games in Canada” (Canadian Olympic Committee, 2006, 3).
Two bylaws recognized by the IOC’s Olympic Charter further spell-out the COC’s authority and financial autonomy:

13.01 In the event a Canadian City is approved by the Board to be a candidate city for the organization of an Olympic Games, the COC shall from the time of the COC’s approval of it, supervise, and exercise the COC’s joint responsibility for, the actions and conduct of the city in relation to the city’s candidature to host the Olympic Games.

13.03 Nothing in the By-Laws shall, expressly or impliedly, be interpreted as creating in or imposing upon the COC any financial responsibility for a city’s candidature (bid) to host the Olympic Games, or for the organization and staging of the Games.

(Canadian Olympic Committee, 2006, 45)

The basic point is that should a Canadian city have aspirations of hosting the Olympic Games it must gain the approval of the COC.

**Sport, the Olympics and the Canadian Federal Government**

The sport delivery system in Canada periodically becomes the subject of parliamentary consideration and the relationship and importance of the Olympics to Canada’s sport policy should not be underestimated. Parliamentarians have periodically had to deal with some very difficult questions. What role should the government play in sport? What goals should it strive for? How much and how should funding be
distributed? What role does sport play in society? Should the government be interested in putting people on podiums or in playgrounds? These and other questions have been the cause for both popular and scholarly debate as well as the subject of numerous policy papers that are beyond the purview of this dissertation. Crucial to the present discussion, however, is the clearly defined commitment the government has outlined regarding the hosting of major international (and smaller scale) sporting events including the Olympics.

In 1997, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage created a Sub-Committee to study the status of sport in the country. The Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada (1998) linked government involvement in the role of sport to a series of poor results in hockey at the 1954 World Championships and at the 1956 and 1960 Olympics. The success of the Soviet Union in using sports to advance a socialist ideology coupled with fantastic athletic achievements by elite athletes “caused many Western industrialized countries to modify their Victorian attitudes towards sports” (Whitson 1996, 45). The response in Canada was the passing of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act of 1961, a bill that is widely regarded as having spurred formal government involvement in sport (MacIntosh & Whitson 1990).

With the national unity crises acting as a backdrop in the 1960s, the role of sport in helping to foster nationalism was promoted by Pierre Trudeau, who created a Task Force on Sports for Canadians in 1969. The work of this Task Force marked the beginning of a number of sport related agencies: National Sport and Recreation Centre (NSRC), the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC), ParticipAction, the Canada Games Council and Hockey Canada. Crucially, the Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada (1998, online) notes “[w]hile the federal government was still concerned with the
fitness of average Canadians, the original focus of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act, these early policy developments began to carve out the federal role in supporting high performance sport infrastructure.” Not surprisingly, we find that periods of increased grants and Federal involvement paralleled Canada’s success in winning the right to host the large scale international events such as the Olympic Games in Montreal and Calgary\(^{23}\) as well as smaller national events such as the Canada Games.\(^{24}\)

**The Commitment to a National Hosting Program**

In 1983, Sport Canada outlined a hosting policy to capitalize on its success at staging several of the world’s most important sporting events (Olympic, Commonwealth, Pan American Games, etc.). In particular, the hosting of the Pan-American Games in Winnipeg in 1967 was singled out as having captured the interest among Canadians for hosting international sporting events. While winning international events was deemed praiseworthy, there was a growing concern over the number of events that were being “staged in Canada by default” (Canada 1983, 4). As the hosting policy (Canada 1983, 4) booklet outlined, “some events contribute only minimally, if at all, to the development of high performance sport in Canada.” At a time when resources were tight, the hosting policy was designed to ensure that the benefits of these events would be maximized. In the forthcoming chapters, we will examine how the Olympics are now used as a symbolic lever for local urban development.

\(^{23}\) We might also take note of the fact that the federal Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada was performing their work while Toronto and Vancouver were ramping up their campaigns to bid for the 2008 and 2010 Olympic bids respectively.

\(^{24}\) Whitson (1996) explains that the Canada Games Council was designed to include not only representatives from the federal government, but members from the individual provinces and territories, as well as appointees from the various sport federations.
The work of a recent Strategic Hosting Work Group, appointed in 2003 by the Honourable Paul Villers, Secretary of State (Physical Activity and Sport), makes it clear that there remains a nationalistic impulse for the support of international sporting events. While acknowledging that “the distribution of events across Canada has not been sufficiently balanced” (Task Force Report, 2003, 2), the Strategic Hosting Work Group found an abundance of enthusiastic but inexperienced cities seeking to attract various sporting events largely for tourist and economic reasons. Acknowledging that not all bids would be successful, the work group stressed the need to re-bid if the initial bids fail. The recommended bidding schedule for major events was shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Multi-Sport Event</th>
<th>Canada should bid To host in</th>
<th>Hosting Decision Made by IF in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olympic/Paralympic Summer Games</td>
<td>2016/2020/2024</td>
<td>2009/2013/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympic/Paralympic Winter Games</td>
<td>2030</td>
<td>2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Games</td>
<td>2014a/2026b</td>
<td>2007/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan American Games</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer World University Games (FISU)</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter World University Games (FISU)</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Olympics World Summer Games</td>
<td>2017/2021</td>
<td>2012/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Olympics World Winter Games</td>
<td>2019/2023</td>
<td>2014/2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If Hamilton does not win the 2010 Commonwealth Games bid.
†If Hamilton wins the 2010 Commonwealth Games bid.25
(Source: Task Force Report 2003, 5)

The work group defined ambitious but not unrealistic goals given the country’s rich history of hosting international events (for example: Olympic Games Montreal 1976,

25 The footnotes were part of the original table. Please note, the 2010 Commonwealth Games were awarded to Delhi, India (see http://www.commonwealthgames.ca). Both Toronto and Montreal have expressed an interest in bidding for the 2014 Commonwealth Games.
In an avowedly egalitarian country, the funding of sport can send mixed messages. The organizations that have facilitated the training of high performance athletes have increasingly replaced the values of amateurism and volunteerism with professionalism, corporatism and technological advancement (Green & Houlihan 2004). The transformation has created casualties. The status of individual sports, the value of individual athletes and the regionalism associated with the construction of National Sports Centers or ‘‘centers of excellence’’ has produced strained relationships amongst the various stakeholders. Put bluntly, ethnic, regional, class, and gender equality has historically suffered under Sport Canada’s aim to promote high performance. Francophones, women, minority groups and rural areas have been significantly under represented (MacIntosh & Whitson 1990). It is important to recognize that the degree of inequity is not limited to athlete participation. Membership on National Sport Organization Boards of Directors, coaching positions, technical staff jobs, administrators, often fail to reflect diversity as well (Whitson 1996). In addition, we find that the 1990s were a particularly bleak period for many sport agencies as funds were channeled away from sport.26 In Ontario, investments in sports centers and high performance athletes coincided with cuts to physical education programs and increased municipal user fees. After school sports programs have been axed, new facilities have been slow to

26 General sport participation in Canada was reported to have dropped more than 10% from 1992 to 1998. While a number of factors contribute to this reduction, such as lack of time and interest, the narrow focus of sport funding towards high-performance sport has been highlighted as contributing to the falling participation rates (Sport Canada 2001).
materialize and obesity levels have been rising. Sport and leisure, as budget items, simply do not rank as high as health and social services (Bercovitz 2000).

On the other hand, the Canadian sports system periodically demonstrates the “resiliency of the stern idealism of the Ontario amateurs” (Kidd 1998, 167). Following Ben Johnson’s fall-from-fame during the 1988 Olympics, Kidd (1998) claims that the value of sport “as education for citizenship” resurfaced. Citing a national opinion poll, Kidd (1998) highlights that “[t]he majority of respondents said that the primary purpose of sport should be character-building and fostering personal development.” Canadians, Kidd (1998) claims, still believe in the value of fair play over a-win-at-all costs mentality. It is the intertwined ideologies of nationalism and amateurism and the continued amateur legacy of the muscular Christians that enables us to continue to view sport as “a sphere of public culture representative of the social good” (Kidd, 1998, 168).

The Olympics: a powerful symbol

The Olympics are truly a global phenomenon. According to Kevin Wamsley, director of the International Center for Olympic Studies (University of Western Ontario), “[s]o far reaching is the influence of the so-called modern Olympic movement that we do not or cannot imagine any alternatives for sport.” (Wamsley 2005). In an earlier chapter I indicated that the Olympic symbol has the highest recognition factor in the world (Pound 1998). With more countries affiliated with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) than the United Nations (UN)27 this sporting body has considerable influence on the cultures of sport in member nations. Without the presence of the Olympic Games, the

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27 As of 2007 there was 205 National Olympic Committees and 192 members of the United Nations (http://www.olympic.org/uk/organisation/noc/index_uk.asp; http://www.un.org/members/list.shtml)
numerous National Olympic Committees (NOC’s) such as the Canadian Olympic Association (COA) would have no reason to exist.

The term sporting monoculture is often used to describe the high value attached to performance sport that the IOC celebrates and that national programs strive to produce (Wamsley 2002, Whitson 1998). More recent initiatives such as The Olympic Partner (TOP) marketing agreement which allows large multinational corporations to use the IOC delivery system to increase their scope have continued the trend. In addition, the IOC also operates a Court of Arbitration for Sport, “to which many sovereign legal systems have deferred” (Miller et al. 1999, 25-26). The value of the Solidary Program, which distributes a portion of the IOC’s broadcasting rights to National Olympic Committees (especially in Africa) for sports development (coaching clinics, equipment, training scholarships), is a program that has wide public support. These and other initiatives reveal that the IOC’s influence often extends well beyond sport.

Power in too few hands can be detrimental to sport (Wamsley 2005). Writing in 1922, Coubertin (printed in Müller 2000, 209) confidently claimed, “[t]he rhythm of the Olympiads has entered the fabric of international life, and is now a regular factor in that life.” Yet the power of the IOC has grown to proportions “undreamed of by the men who, a century ago, founded tiny organizations that for years foundered on the edge of obscurity and bankruptcy” (Keys 2006, 42). The IOC’s capacity to attract and distribute money through sponsorships and broadcast rights makes the sporting world go. Without the television money that the IOC allocates to the International Federations, these bodies could not survive. Richard Pound (2004, 251) provides a chilling portrait of the IOC’s power over sporting federations arguing,
the great majority of Olympic IFs could not survive without the television money that the IOC provides from the Olympic Games. Their sports would all but disappear if ever they were to come off the Olympic program. The domino effect would be precipitous: they would drop off regional and continental games, they would cease to get national funding from most governments. Young athletes would not enter the competitive structure of sports that did not offer an Olympic goal and sponsors would have no interest in sports that had no future.

It is for this reason that sport federations do not seek to withdraw from the Games.

Despite the positive overtones and lofty ambition of Coubertin’s Olympic internationalism, Hoberman (1986, 9-10) reminds us, the movement was still built upon a “core repertory of behaviours and attitudes” that included “a rhetoric of universal membership, a Eurocentric orientation that limits universal participation, an insistence on political neutrality, the empowering role of wealth, social prominence and aristocratic affiliations.” While we might celebrate the massive expansion of countries participating in the Olympic Games, Hoberman’s (1986, 2) point that they still adhere to a “core doctrine” of “amoral universalism” is instructive. He accuses the Olympics of failing to “possess the power of discourse”, arguing that sport “is universally acceptable because it does not make judgments” (Hoberman 2, 6). The crucial point he offers is that “[t]he consensus universalis is never ruptured as a matter of principle.” Using Coubertin’s words, Hoberman (1986, 2) demonstrates that the Olympic movement must “play the chameleon.” It is in recognizing the malleability of the Olympics that we find its symbolic power.
More than a century after their revival, we find that the modern Olympics have been penetrated by the broadest range of ‘isms’: commercialism, nationalism, heroism, professionalism, racism, sexism, gigantism, chauvinism, social Darwinism, feminism, imperialism, terrorism, patriotism, cultural imperialism, modernism and so on. There exists a substantial body of literature that charts the significance of these interlacings. As we shall see in the next chapter, part of the current allure of the Olympics is their ability to influence urbanism. Unquestionably, those who sponsor an aggressive market economy and bullish political interests have given Olympism new contours. At the same time, many of Coubertin’s ideas – moral education, amateurism, humanitarianism, peace, the spirit of friendship, solidarity – remain rooted in public consciousness on what the Olympics should mean.

For more than a century there has been debate over the values of the Olympic Games. The continued attention is telling according to MacAloon (1981, x) who argues: “the Olympic Games are an institution without parallel in kind or in scope in the twentieth century. Insofar as there exists…a ‘world-historical process,’ the Olympic Games have emerged as its privileged expression and celebration.” For MacAloon (1981, 5) the Olympics Games are,

- an immense playground, marketplace, theatre, battlefield, church, arena, festival and Broadway of cultural images, symbols and meanings.
- Whatever else they do—including such essentially nonsymbolic things as get people killed or save their lives, line or empty pockets, ensure their

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happiness or steal it from them—the Games do because of their capacity to attract, amass, ramify, and distribute vast symbolic energies.

It is on this basis that MacAloon gives his biography of Coubertin the title, *This Great Symbol* (1981). The critical point is that although sport may be thought of as an “ambiguous signifier” (Guttmann 1986, 2), its malleability makes the Olympics a public symbol of supreme importance. Despite his book-length criticism of the Olympic movement, Hoberman (1986, 125) eventually concedes: “[w]hat redeems the Games is their profoundly ambiguous nature.” Drawing on MacAloon’s (quoted in Hoberman 1986, 125) point that the Olympic spectacle forces people to take “notice and heed moral and social boundaries that have become blurred and banal in daily life”, Hoberman (1986, 125) concludes that “[t]he value of the Games…resides in their power to offer an enormous public a massive lesson in the epistemology of everyday life.”
Chapter 6. Olympic urbanism and the transformation of urban space

It is ironic that the Olympic Games, originally designed to protect the amateur ethos and to provide a counter-balance to the influence of commercial and professional sport, are now a global commercial spectacle (Gruneau 2006, 578). The “historical illusions” produced by Coubertin and the supporters of Muscular Christianity, helped to forge a symbol that attached “a higher social or moral purpose” to sport while simultaneously leaving the Olympic Games malleable to commercial interests (Gruneau 2006, 578, 577). While amateurism is no longer the driving force of Olympic sport, and the presence of professional athletes (witness the United States’ “dream team” in basketball at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona) in the Olympic Games has become commonplace, the importance of fair play and sportsmanship remain recognized values of Olympism. Moreover, the continued emphasis on amateurism in community and school sport demonstrates that it has had more than a residual effect.

In the previous chapters I explored the production of the Olympic symbol and explained that the potent combination of amateurism and nationalism allowed the IOC to
position itself as the controlling entity of a global sports economy. Sporting events matter, Matthew Burbank et al. (2001, 33) argue, because they have “tremendous symbolic significance and because they influence the allocation of scarce public resources.” In this chapter we will find that the Olympic Games—controlled by the IOC, sponsored by National Olympic Committees, and promoted by federal hosting programs—have come to be viewed by many cities as a prestigious symbol upon which to base urban redevelopment. It is useful to remind ourselves that the IOC demands that cities, not nations, play host to the Olympic Games. This means that urban politics play a central role in both the bidding and the staging of the Olympic Games. Through an investigation of the evolution of the Olympic bidding process, this chapter explains how the Olympics have come to occupy a prestigious position in the symbolic economy and outlines the ramifications of this popularity.

**Entering the competition: Bidding for the Games**

Early in the twentieth century, bidding for the Olympic Games was a relaxed affair, often “consist[ing] of nothing more than a letter from the city’s mayor informing the IOC of the relevant decision by the city fathers and indicating sports venue already available or yet to be built” (IOC, 1996, 244). In one IOC reflection piece, it is suggested that in the early years it was common for a number of cities to express an interest, however, “by the time the IOC considered that the moment had come to decide, there usually remained only two serious contenders” (IOC 1996, 244). While acknowledging that there was “a certain amount of inter-city competition” prior to the mid-1920s, Maurice Roche (2000, 152) argues that “interest in the Olympics was

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29 The bidding stage for the Olympics did not begin until 1908 (Müller 2000).
variable” and consequently cities “often had to be courted by the IOC rather than the other way around.” Quibbling over the implications of a host city being elected on the basis of outright enthusiasm versus intentional courting would not change one crucial point: since 1896 and every four years thereafter a city has always been scheduled\textsuperscript{30} to host the Games. Even a brief glance at the bidding process for the Olympics Games would be enough to realize that it has “evolved into a highly detailed, lengthy, and competitive process” (McIntosh 2000, 312).

Martha McIntosh (2000) dates the increased attention to the bidding process to the 1950s and in particular to the debacle that surrounded Melbourne’s inability to accommodate the equestrian event at the 1956 Olympics\textsuperscript{31} due to Australia’s equine quarantine law. Importantly, this law was overlooked by the bid team as well as IOC’s selection committee and highlighted the need for a more systematic process of gaining technical and other important information. As McIntosh (2000, 313) writes,

The incident dramatically demonstrated to the IOC that the kind of information being provided by bid contenders was simply no longer thorough enough to permit the Committee’s members to properly judge which candidate would be the most capable of hosting the Olympic celebration.

The result was the introduction of a questionnaire for candidate cities seeking to host the 1960 Olympics. In addition, the International Sport Federations (IF’s) were invited to study, comment and later ask questions (but not vote) on the 1960 Olympic bid

\textsuperscript{30}World War I and World War II prevented the staging of the 1916 Summer Games (Berlin, Germany), the 1944 Summer Games (London, UK) and the 1944 Winter Games (Cortina d’Ampezzo, Italy).

\textsuperscript{31}The equestrian event was held in Stockholm some five months prior to the opening of the Games in Melbourne.
candidate’s technical capabilities (McIntosh 2000). Here, we find the makings of what has come to be regarded as a very strict institutional framework that is outlined by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and given binding legality through the Olympic Charter.

Paralleling the IOC’s early attempts to reduce subjectivity in the bidding process was an increase in the number of cities which were using the Games “to boost their international image and symbolise their status” (Roche 2000, 152). As I noted in the previous chapter, it is not a secret that the Olympics “have offered perfect occasions for national comparisons and preening and for the public fanning of nationalist sentiments” (Whitson & Macintosh 1996, 278). Yet here the malleability of the Olympics is evident as national superiority was not linked to elite athletic performance or the quality of a nations sporting culture, but rather to the process where several Olympic cities (i.e. Helsinki (1952), Rome (1960), Tokyo (1964)) were using the event to demonstrate that their respective countries had recovered from World War II (Roche 2000; Shoval 2002; Pound 2004).

While there was an unmistakable national character to bids following the war (Shoval 2002), several authors have demonstrated that it was the Games of the XVII Olympiad in Rome (1960) that marked the beginning of full scale “urbanistic intervention” (Liao & Pitts 2006, 1239). Prior to this period the continued emphasis on amateurism served to limit over-commercialism and political interference. When combined with transportation limitations and stable urban growth, the adherence to amateurism greatly restricted the potential for the Olympics to dramatically reshape urban environments (Liao & Pitts 2006, 1238). This does not mean that the Olympics
failed to alter the urban fabric during their first half-century; it merely indicates that structural transformation was more limited. Yet, beginning with the Olympic Games of Rome (1960) and continuing through the Games of Tokyo (1964), Munich (1972), and Montreal (1976), large-scale alterations to the built environment became commonplace with the construction of municipal water supply systems, airport facilities, tourist accommodations, sewage disposal plants, road and highway networks, new shopping centers and subways; as well, the restoration of historic quarters and harbour areas often became the signature legacies of hosting (Essex and Chalkley 1998). By the mid-1970s, the Olympics had become equated to large scale capital expenditure and involved significant changes to the host city’s infrastructure. It is estimated that of the nearly US$2.7 billion spent for Tokyo’s Olympics (1964), less than three percent of the expenditure was for competition facilities (Liao & Pitts 2006, 1239).

The post-war competitiveness to host the Olympics was short lived, however. Two incidents in particular shook the foundations of the Olympic movement. First was the terrorist attack on the Israeli team at the 1972 Munich Olympics; second were the financial difficulties of Montreal’s 1976 Olympics. The magnitude of these ‘failures’ is perhaps most obvious in bidding process for the 1984 Summer Olympics—where only Los Angeles put forth a bid. In Roche’s (2000) estimation, the political and economic risks were simply too great, thereby producing “a braking effect on nations’ and cities’ interests in bidding for it [the Olympics]” (Roche 2000, 152).

32 The construction of the Olympic village in Los Angeles (1932) to complement the massive Memorial Coliseum and the creation of an Olympic quarters in Berlin (1936) are two examples that illustrate the urban impact of the Olympic Games prior to WWII.
33 The Games in Montreal (1976) had already been decided upon in 1970 prior to terrorist attacks at the 1972 Olympics. The Winter Olympics (Lake Placid) and Summer Olympics (Moscow) of 1980 had been decided in 1974 prior to the financial disaster of the Montreal 1976 Games.
It was not until the financial success of the Los Angeles Games of 1984 that there was a renewed interest in bidding process. As the only candidate city for the 1984 Games, Los Angeles was in a privileged position when negotiating with the IOC. The result was that those Games were primarily sponsored by the private sector and they relied heavily on the existing sport structures and involved the extensive use of temporary facilities (Liao & Pitts 2006). The decrease in expenditures, especially on sporting facilities, along with a dramatic increase in broadcasting and sponsorship revenues helped Los Angeles turn a profit. Intriguingly, the success of the Los Angeles Olympics was not measured in terms of “athletic competition, goodwill among nations, or even a triumph of logistics,” but instead it was linked to the organizing committee’s ability to generate “positive publicity for the city” without relying on public money (Burbank et al. 2001, 5). Although failing to provide the same urban impact as other post-war Games, the Los Angeles Olympics highlighted the commercial potential of this sporting symbol and demonstrated that it could be profitable business ventures for host cities (Malfas et al. 2004; Essex & Chalkley 1998). As Whitelegg (2000, 802) summarizes: “[p]ut bluntly, the Los Angeles Olympics proved that big sporting events could still act as a financial and symbolic boost, if given the right entrepreneurial backing.” In more specific terms, we find that in the bidding processes for the six Olympic Games from 1980 to 1988 (winter and summer), there were only a total of twelve candidate cities. In turn, the competition for the two Olympics in 1992 alone produced thirteen candidate cities.

The victories of Seoul (1988) and Barcelona (1992) further emphasized the power of the Olympics as a means to kick-start major urban improvement programs and as an opportunity to advertise local, regional and national identity. For example, Barcelona
used the Olympics to revitalize the city’s coastline through extensive brownfield development and to “promote Catalan identity and to assert its importance relative to Madrid, the Spanish national capital” (Essex & Chalkley 1998, 198). In Seoul, the construction of major new cultural amenities such as the Seoul Arts Centre and the National Museum of Contemporary Arts were as central as the new sport installations. Equally notable was the IOC’s 1986 amendment of the definition of amateurism which opened the way for most professional athletes to compete in the Olympics (Crowther 2004). The entrance of professional athletes made the Olympics fully commercial. The increased professionalization, commercialization and corporatization of the Olympics has enabled them to have a more dramatic impact on urban areas. For example, the IOC shares the bulk of its marketing and television revenue with the Olympic Games organizing committees (i.e. 49% of television revenues). The television contract numbers are staggering. Richard Pound, the IOC’s principal representative on broadcast rights, outlines how there has been a steady increase in revenues from around US$1 million for the 1960 Rome Olympics to near US$2 billion for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing (Pound 2004). Seagrave (2000, 279n1) puts these values in perspective noting, “[i]n 1960, television provided only 1 of every 400 dollars of the cost of hosting the games; today, television revenues account for more than 1 in every 2 dollars.” The establishment of long-term broadcasting deals has meant that cities interested in the Olympics can point towards the guaranteed revenue when promoting the bid. By mixing sport, cultural consumption and entertainment, the Olympics were reframed as event that could stimulate urban renewal, recognition and reputation.
Operating in a new economic climate characterized by deindustrialization, post-Fordism and globalization, many cities have been forced to adopt more entrepreneurial models of urban growth (Harvey 1989; Owen 2002; Andranovich et al. 2001; Essex & Chalkley 1998; Waitt 1999; Wilson 1996; Whitelegg 2000; Eisinger 2000; Hannigan 1998; Hiller 2006). In general terms, the formation of a global urban hierarchy that recognizes urban areas as crucial economic motors has pitted cities against one another in a struggle to secure inward investment (Cochrane et al. 1996). As manufacturing jobs are replaced with those from the information technologies and service sectors, cities both create and demand new pools of labour. The result has been that the competition for talent and tourists has given rise to fierce place wars with numerous cities (as well as regions and nations) seeking to demonstrate their competitive advantages. Meanwhile, the shift away from urban industrial activity leaves open the possibility for the refashioning of urban space. As former industrial lands have become available for redevelopment, the current trend is for cities to gentrify many of these sites through the provision of consumptive leisure (Hiller 2006). In this process of urban economic restructuring, Sir Peter Hall (2000, 640) claims that “culture” has now become “the magic substitute for all the lost factories and warehouses, and as a device that will create a new urban image.” The dilemma that emerges, however, is that when more cities embrace the prospects of the symbolic economy, the struggle for reinvention becomes more intense. The periodicity of Olympics further adds to the competitive struggle.

Returning to the evolution of the bidding process, we find that since the early 1980s there has been an “embarrassment of riches in terms of the number of possible
candidates” (Pound 2004, 202) seeking to play host to the world’s premier sporting event. This has made the bidding process an intensely competitive process (McIntosh 2000). The Olympic symbol has become so alluring, David Whitson (2004, 1215) argues, that the “struggles between cities and nations to host the Olympic Games have now become as intensely competitive as the events themselves.” The current attractiveness of the Olympic Games becomes more apparent when one realizes that the IOC limits the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) to a single nomination (see IOC 2007, Rule 34 Bylaw 1.3). This means that for each Olympic Games, a country can only put forth one bid city. As a result, many countries have a national competition that precedes the international round. For example, New York’s 2012 bid was selected over seven other domestic proposals (San Francisco, Houston, Washington, Cincinnati, Dallas, Los Angeles and Tampa).

Civic officials, Harry Hiller (2006, 317) explains, no longer think of the Olympics “just as sport but as an opportunity to accomplish items on their own urban agenda.” What we find is that although the pursuit of mega-events is not a new phenomenon, the underlying rationale to pursue them has become more acute. For example, Cochrane et al (1996, 1326,1327), have posited that Manchester’s bid for the 1996 Olympics was cast as a “game Manchester felt it had to play”, with the authors arguing that “Manchester may have opted for an Olympics-based development strategy, but this was a choice made from a menu with few alternatives.”

Sadly, the competitive economic environment, along with an “increase in the number of candidate cities, can also be blamed for negatively injecting a decidedly pronounced, ‘win, no matter what it costs’ tactical approach into the competitive
dimension of the bid process” (McIntosh 2000, 316). The increased number of cities seeking to host the Olympic Games and the tainted bidding process for the Salt Lake City Olympics (2002) forced the IOC to split the international bidding process into two tiers. The new system was designed both to reduce unnecessary expenditures for cities not yet sufficiently prepared to host the Games and to reduce the work load of the IOC evaluation commission (McIntosh 2000). This streamlined process has been effectively explained by Richard Pound (2004, 202-203):

> [w]e have had to develop a screening process to reduce the number of candidates to a manageable level. Nine cities, for example, have been vying for the 2012 Games. Some are not qualified and would clearly represent wrong choices, at least for the purposes of the Games under consideration, and we have developed a two-stage process by which a city is first an “applicant” and only after an initial screening can it advance to the stage of being a “candidate” city. In such a process, there should probably be no more than two or three cities that become candidates, but this means that the IOC has to be ready to say no, at least for now, to some important countries and this has proven, predictably, to be politically difficult for the IOC.34

While Pound was justifying the actions of the IOC, his suggestion that some cities lack the capacity to play host points to another difficulty of assigning this mega-event. Despite the growing number of bids over the last few decades, the Games have not regionally

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34 Rule 34 Bylaw 1.6 of the Olympic Charter reads as follows: “All applicant cities shall comply with a candidature acceptance procedure, conducted under the authority of the IOC Executive Board, which shall determine the contents of such procedure. The IOC Executive Board shall decide which cities will be accepted as candidate cities” (IOC 2007).
expanded even though the applicant pool has diversified. As Figure 6.1 illustrates, since 1984, cities in North America, Europe, Eastern Asia, and Australia have dominated the bidding competition. To date, neither South America nor Africa has produced an ‘Olympic City’.

Figure 6.1. Distribution of applicant/candidate and host Olympic cities since 1984.

The notion of reducing the number of candidate of cities had been on the IOC’s agenda for some time. For some, like Denis Howell (Birmingham’s 1992 Olympic bid campaign member), there is an important caveat to consider when considering the reduction of bids. Critically, Howell (quoted in Simson & Jennings 1992, 256-257) comments,
He [former IOC president Antonio Samaranch] wants a number of bids because it’s all part of the collective ego of the organisation, which is why I say we should stop that method of selection. It’s quite wrong and a terrible waste of public money...I think that Samaranch and his colleagues now find the bidding process so essential and important to the future of the IOC that they will never restrict it. What’s really happening is that the six bidding cities are providing millions of pounds of publicity for the IOC which doesn’t cost the IOC a penny. If you look at it in those terms then it’s very rewarding for the IOC and that’s why in my view they will try and keep it within bounds but they will never really stop it.

Introducing an applicant phase into the bidding process at first glance does appear to be a restrictive act by the IOC, but this restructuring effort does come at a time when, as mentioned, there has been a sizable increase in the number of bids.35

What is an Olympic City? Whose city is it? The Olympics and the cultural politics of local economic development

It is the capacity of the Olympics to simultaneously address issues of image and infrastructure that currently makes it a powerful symbol. It is the ability of the Olympics to “play the chameleon”—as I mentioned in the last chapter—that makes them an ideal symbol for cities looking to “justify significant projects of renewal and regeneration,

35 Beyond the new tiered application process, the IOC also placed a ban on visits by IOC members to candidate cities bidding for the right to host the Olympics.
advertise their status and personality and, thus, attract new inward investment and modernize their economies” (Essex & Chalkley 2004, 201). Hosting large scale mega-events allows city boosters to demonstrate their city’s technical capacity while simultaneously displaying the attractiveness of their location for further investment (Hiller 2006). For Hiller (2006, 320) the “ability to mobilize capital for Olympic infrastructure is considered to be symbolic of a city’s capacity to compete with other cities by taking on such a large-scale multi-faceted projected.” Helen Wilson (1996, 603) has captured the difficulty of addressing the question of “what is an Olympic City?” by arguing that a host city has to perform a “dual function”. Not only does it have to operate as a “stand-in for the nation”, but it also has to be a “worldly city” capable of “being seamlessly linked to global networks” (Wilson 1996, 603). We might build on Wilson’s (1996) assessment of what an Olympic city is by noting that as host cities navigate the tensions of glocalisation, they have to mindful of the cultural politics of local economic development. Eugene McCann (2002, 387) defines cultural politics as “a set of discursive and material practices in and through which meanings are defined and struggled over, where social norms and values are naturalized, and by which ‘common sense’ is constructed and contested.” In essence, when considering: what is an Olympic city? It is important to ask: whose city is it?

The promise of international media exposure, an occasion to build national identity and civic pride, an opportunity to leverage funds from senior levels of government, as well as a strict time-line for development are often touted as the benefits of hosting and are employed to legitimate public expenditure. Such rationales are connected to “the positive view that residents and corporate sponsors alike hold of the
Olympics to build widespread support for the premise of the mega-event strategy” (Burbank et al. 2001, 160). From this perspective, bidding for the Olympics is an exercise in developing symbolic consensus through symbolic manipulation. The Olympics, Burbank et al. (2001, 28) argue, “provides an ideal platform for a local development agenda because it allows growth proponents access to the popular symbolism of international sports and makes opposition to development projects associated with those symbols more difficult.”

The construction of multiple sporting venues and their supporting infrastructure, the catering to athletes, officials and audiences, the demands on the transportation network, and the refashioning of the city to meet the communicative and consumptive demands of tourists often overshadows the fact that real people actually live in the host city. Not surprisingly, their understanding of what an Olympic city is does not always mesh with those of growth-minded visionaries. Residents do, of course, have to work and play in the Olympic city long after the crowds have dissipated.

Recent Olympic bids have indicated that community consultation, public accountability and social cohesion have not historically been strengths of the bidding process (Lenskyj 1996). Moreover, several scholars have shown that increased privatization as well as greater centralization of the planning process has been the result of Olympic success (Owen 2002; Waitt 1999, 2003; Hiller 1990; Whitelegg 2000; Rutheiser 1996). Other research has illustrated that local residents who have a long term interest in the ‘legacies’ of the Olympic Games often express concern over issues of access, representation and accountability during the bidding process. To local-area residents, concerns over inflation, housing prices and increased policing are just as
important as the issues of job creation, urban regeneration and city image. In addition, many citizens are cognizant of the fact that “infrastructure spending in most Olympic cities still represents public money” and as a result they seek guarantees that the Olympic bid and the Games will not unduly strain their pocketbooks (Whitson 2004, 1226).

**The symbolic transformation of space**

In an earlier chapter I hinted that the bidding process can provide the occasion for interested publics to articulate social and cultural claims. I also indicated that it could be the occasion for the defeat of the public interest. The difference between these two outcomes has much to do with how and by whom the Olympic symbol is manipulated and how meaning and purpose are attached to urban public space during the bidding process. The remainder of the dissertation will address the interplay between local, sub-national, national authorities representing both public and private interests in the framing of Toronto’s 2008 Olympic bid. Central to the discussion will be to consider how the spatial plan of Toronto’s bid was developed and legitimated. The importance attributed to public land in the bidding process helps us to see space as a dynamic category of analysis and allows us to imagine how struggles over specific parcels of land are really a struggle over spatial and social order. Let us now turn to an examination of Toronto’s 2008 Olympic bid.
Part II. The wake of the waterfront: Is Toronto washed out?
No single individual fully claimed responsibility for launching Toronto’s 2008 Olympic bid. Instead a loose coalition of public officials (including David Crombie, Mel Lastman (Mayor of North York), Joe Halstead (North York parks and recreation commissioner), Barbara Hall (Mayor of Toronto) and William Bell (Mayor of Scarborough) were credited with putting the bid in motion. The involvement of Mel Lastman and Joe Halstead was not surprising given that the North York duo had aspirations of bringing the 2001 Canada Summer Games to their municipality. North York was just one of nine Ontario bid committees that had tried to woo the Canada Games Secretariat by promoting the underdeveloped Downsview military base as an ideal place to hold the domestic games. North York’s submission did not make the provincial short-list, a decision Lastman claimed was linked to the province’s decision to

amalgamate Metro’s six municipalities. Nevertheless, Lastman attempted to funnel the enthusiasm generated from the Canada Games bid towards an even bigger prize – the 2008 Olympic Games.

Lastman made his desire for a major sporting event well known: “‘[c]all them the North York Games, the Metro Games, or the GTA\(^{37}\) Games…But whatever you call them, we want them here’” (Lastman quoted in van Rijn, Nicolas, *The Toronto Star*, 30 July 1996, A1). North York’s cheerleading was soon joined by other Toronto area politicians, notably Richmond Hill mayor William Bell, who pressed the GTA mayor’s committee to submit a bid after reading about the Canadian Olympic Association’s deadline in a municipal magazine (Cooly, *Now Magazine*. Vol. 15 (48), August 1-7, 1996).

The struggle to pinpoint the Games regionally reveals the sense of ambivalence that characterized Toronto’s 2008 Olympic bid in the early going. Newspaper articles reveal that originally representatives from both North York and Toronto had planned on submitting their own bids. Lastman did tout the brilliance of a Downsview Olympic park, but later newspaper accounts reveal a shift where North York would “join forces with all Metro and 905 municipalities to provide a variety of venues” (Ferenc, *The Toronto Star*, 1 February 1997, C6). Tellingly, Carol Anne Letheren, chief executive officer of the Canadian Olympic Association made it clear that “[a]ny North York bid would have to be part of a joint effort by Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area” (Letheren quoted in van Rijn, Nicolas, *The Toronto Star*, 30 July 1996, A1). It was a less than subtle reminder to the interested parties that they would require the backing of the COA in order to pursue the bid internationally. In essence, Letheren was stamping the COA’s authority.

\(^{37}\) GTA stands for Greater Toronto Area.
The firmness of Letheren’s tone can be linked to her discussions with David Crombie on the matter of a Toronto bid. It is reported that in the fall of 1995, Letheren called Crombie seeking potential ideas on how to raise the profile of Canada’s Olympic Movement (Lorinc 2001, online). One suggestion that proved successful was the involvement of Olympic Athletes in a relay race along the new Waterfront Trail that was sponsored by the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, of which David Crombie was chair. It was a partnership of mutual convenience. Crombie had been intimately involved in trying to create a trail that stretched along Lake Ontario’s shoreline connecting communities from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Brockville, Ontario. For Crombie, the trail became a “clothes line” with different municipalities “pinning” different agendas on it (Crombie 2004a). The City of Toronto had proven to be the “most difficult test” with members of the Regeneration Trust combating not only a sense of “arrogance” but also confronting the numerous agencies involved and the split that existed between Metro and the City (Crombie 2004a). It was very difficult, Crombie claims, to “herd all the turtles and bring all the egos together” (Crombie 2004a). Those familiar with David Crombie know that he has spent the better part of his adult life trying to establish a vision for Toronto’s waterfront. He had tried numerous strategies with varying degrees of success but had, admittedly, been unable to secure a powerful project that could provide clarity and definition to Toronto’s waterfront. In his opinion, the only suitable way to break through the jurisdiction gridlock that characterized Toronto’s waterfront (in the late 1990s) was to pursue the Olympic Games or the World’s Fair (Crombie 2004a). His conversations with Letheren seemed to have confirmed this belief.
While *Toronto Life* columnist John Lorinc (2001, online) reports that Crombie “claims not to remember whose idea it [the Olympics] was”, he notes that Crombie did find “himself at her [Letheren’s] St. Clair [street] office, talking about a bid for 2008”. Crombie also filed a letter with the COA in May 1996. Crombie admits that he knew that “Mel [Lastman] wanted it” but he also knew that “Toronto was going to have a hard enough time [winning the Olympics]. Selling North York to the world” he thought to be impossible (Crombie 2004a). According to Jeff Evenson, Crombie’s trusted advisor at the Waterfront Regeneration Trust and a principal voice during Toronto’s 2008 Olympic Bid, Carol Anne, I think, almost planted the seed…I wouldn’t say that she was driving anything…but it was her view, that there had to be somebody that could bring together all of the components of the bid, or components to create the popular support for the bid, and in her view, I think, that guy was David Crombie. (Evenson 2004).

Without question, Crombie’s presence added credibility to Toronto’s bid, especially at the local level. He had garnered a great degree of local popularity during his distinguished political career, having earned the label of Toronto’s “tiny, perfect mayor” for his efforts during the city’s reform era of the 1970s. His deep understanding of local politics coupled with his continued populist appeal gave the bid a degree of local legitimacy. Given his legacy as a known consensus builder, Crombie provided an alluring mix of personality and performance to pacify the skeptics and to develop strong community support for the bid. In the words of one columnist, Crombie represented the city’s “civic conscience” (Barber, *The Globe and Mail*, 21 August 1996, A2). It was
Crombie’s understanding of Toronto culture that garnered him praise during the early days of the bid. As John Barber (*The Globe and Mail*, 21 August 1996, A2) put it, “[n]o brash promoter in the style of Atlanta’s Billy Payne[^38], Mr. Crombie is quietly writing the script for a civic games. He wants to play down the corporate hype and build up Olympic spirit from the grassroots, using the bid to unite the entire urban region and demonstrate to the world what it stands for.” Barber (*The Globe and Mail*, 21 August 1996, A2) further adds, “[i]n 1996, Toronto has no idea what it stands for; in fact, it has no idea what it is. In leading the Olympic bid, Mr. Crombie is challenging a hopelessly Balkanized place to reimagine itself as an integrated city-region with a common set of values.” Barber (*The Globe and Mail*, 21 August 1996, A2) concludes his article by offering this fine praise: “[h]e [Crombie] is the spirit of Toronto, and thank goodness we still have one.”

From the beginning Crombie maintained that his goal was not simply to get another bid rolling in Toronto, but the motivation was to use the “Olympic bid as a catalyst to bring together the power and the forces of levels of government and others to resolve the waterfront” (Crombie 2004a). While drawn to the capacity of the Olympics to facilitate city building, he also recognized that “[t]here are certain traditions, certain instincts that are part of the civic culture of Toronto that impose itself on a bid” (Crombie 2004a). These are the words of a skilled bureaucrat. Two important events must be kept in mind when considering the timing of Toronto’s 2008 Olympic bid. First, the bid came on the heels of a failed 1996 Olympic bid that had been unable to positively stir the imagination of the populace. Second, the provincial government forced the amalgamation of the upper-tier Metro Toronto and the city’s six lower-tier municipalities. It was a

[^38]: Barber is referring to the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta.
process that consumed the city’s attention and many believed threatened the very participatory culture that Crombie has been credited with helping to instill, and now, as Barber indicated, seemed to represent.

**The 1996 Olympic Bid**

Toronto’s 1996 bid did not generate strong support from senior levels of government. Moreover, the apparent lack of political will was accompanied by the strong protests from the city’s social justice groups who criticized the lack of public consultation surrounding the bid process. The failure of Toronto’s 1996 bid is often linked to the vocal dissent of a local activist group named Bread Not Circuses and the failure to court local support during the process (Kidd 1992, Lenskyj 1992 Olds 1996; Rutheiser 1996, Paul 2005). According to Bruce Kidd (1992), a significant part of the problem with Toronto’s 1996 Olympic Bid was the overwhelming emphasis on winning the votes of the members of the International Olympic Committee. Kidd (1992) suggests that the Toronto Ontario Olympic Committee (TOOC) underestimated the risks of failing to meaningfully engage in a local public consultation process. It was a miscalculation of magnificent proportions. As Kidd (1992, 155) highlights, Toronto is the “centre of English-speaking Canada’s publications industry” with television stations, newspapers and weekly circulations always poised to pounce on controversy. During the TOOC’s campaign to win the Centennial celebration of the Olympic Games, Toronto was “experiencing its worst affordable housing crises in history” (Olds 1996, 42). Yet Toronto’s 1996 bid team, led by businessman and former Olympic sailor, Paul Henderson, attempted to operate above local place-based realities. The TOOC’s continued emphasis on winning international acclaim and its failure to address local concerns went against the grain of a city that had
earned a reputation for its commitment to an open decision-making process. This caused
two groups in particular, Toronto’s City Hall bureaucrats and a local activist group,
Bread Not Circuses, to examine the bid team’s lobbying efforts. With the involvement of
these two stakeholders, TOOC’s maneuverings were interrogated from two different
angles. First, there was the investigative style of a city-led Olympic Task Force (OTF),
which dissected TOOC’s bureaucratic reports. Second, the local activist group Bread Not
Circuses (BNC) added the flavour of street activism into the mix (Kidd 1992). The
combined efforts of these two groups revealed a number of inadequacies and
inconsistencies with TOOC’s plans. But the principal message being articulated by
stakeholders was that it was financially reckless to be considering the construction of
Olympic facilities when the city’s problems in supplying affordable housing remained
unresolved (Olds 1996, 42).

Instead of trying to appease or co-opt critics like BNC and embrace the advice
and recommendations of the city’s Olympic Task Force, Kidd (1992, 158) claims that the
Henderson lead TOOC “treated both as enemies.” As one newspaper account put it,

[p]art of the problem is that while Henderson handles the wooing of the
IOC with aplomb, he knew next to nothing about the potential pitfalls on
the domestic front. When Mayor Art Eggleton delivered a unanimous vote
on the bid from city council in 1986, Henderson seemed to think that was
it. He and other Olympic supporters never seemed to realized [sic] it was
just as important to continue to wander down alderman's alley at City Hall
as it was to prowl the corridors at IOC sessions in Switzerland or South
Korea.
In short, Henderson was accused of being pugnacious to groups who questioned his leadership. Eventually, “local community groups and some civic politicians [became] impatient with the perceived “closed shop” mentality of TOOC organizers”, and their frustration “spurred them into action” (Olds 1996, 42). The result was the formation of the Toronto Olympic Commitment (TOC) by Toronto’s left-leaning city councilors who sought to broaden the public goals of the Olympics (Kidd 1992). Pursuing the values of Olympism was fine, but the city had pressing needs that had to be included in the Olympic project if support was to be established. It was “a strategy,” Kidd (1992, 160) notes, “that quickly captured the middle ground,” although some groups including Bread Not Circuses thought the “municipal caucus had stepped into an unwinnable compromise.” In essence, the coupling of sport and social issues continued to have its boosters and detractors and the 1996 bid never managed to generate more than a lukewarm message of support from either the City Council or the citizenry.

As noted, Toronto lost the bid to Atlanta. While Atlanta’s populace cheered its victory, Torontonians spent considerable effort jeering those responsible for the city’s loss. The newspapers cataloged the outpouring of emotion, printing numerous articles many of which can be best summarized as exercises in finger pointing. Few officials remained unscathed. The newly elected Premier, Bob Rae, was criticized for failing to make a “personal pitch” to the IOC. City councilor Jack Layton was blasted for liaising with Bread Not Circuses. For some, “[t]he bid was wrong and it was handled wrongly by the wrong guy” (Proudfoot, The Toronto Star, 19 September 1990, C1). Others argued
that “we should accept the fact that the TOOC bid was perfect and that Atlanta’s bid was just a little more perfect” (*The Toronto Star*, 20 September 1990, D07).

To an international audience Torontonians must have appeared as passionate sulkers, and leading the chorus of pouting was Paul Henderson. Initially Henderson (quoted in Byers, *The Toronto Star*, 19 September 1990, A01) bravely accepted the bid’s defeat employing a sailing metaphor to reflect his position: “[w]hen you’re the skipper of the boat and you don’t win the race, the only one you can blame is yourself.” In short order however, Henderson readopted the adversarial tone that had irked many throughout the bidding process. Voicing his opinions to columnist Pat Brennan (*The Toronto Star*, 21 September 1990, A01) Henderson “accused the Toronto media of stabbing the city’s bid in the back”, and placed blame on Mayor Art Eggleton “for lack of leadership”. Henderson expressed his disgust with groups such as Bread Not Circuses, criticizing its members for being anti-Toronto and anti-Canadian. He further accused them of arousing a negative image of the city and of the bid on baseless opinions, and of falsely adding depth to public dismay. In his estimation, though, the real “Achilles heel” was a “city council” that failed to deliver. “It did nothing for three years. Absolutely nothing” he quipped (Brennan, *The Toronto Star*, 21 September 1990, A01).

Clearly there was no shortage of scapegoats who became targets responsible for Toronto’s defeat. Writing a little more than a month following the loss, Colin Vaughan (*The Toronto Star*, 30 November 1990, 23) offered his opinion:

[s]ome have argued that the campaign peaked too soon, while others blame the failure on the stubbornness of the organizers. For my money the gamble was doomed from the start because the cards were too closely
held, because the effort was too much of Rosedale, the flavour was just too wasp, too much entertaining went on at the rcyc [Royal Canadian Yacht Club] and the Rosedale Golf Club and the bid represented too much the ideals of a blue-blazed old Toronto long gone.

For Vaughan, a sure sign that something was amiss was the fact that the bid committee lacked the cultural diversity that makes Toronto a special city. In another bid post mortem, the Ontario Ministry of Tourism of Recreation (OMTR) issued a report outlining the weaknesses of the bid, the bidding process and the individuals representing TOOC. As Olds (1996, 47) highlights, “the report suggests that TOOC did not involve the “community” in meaningful discourse and it noted that “[I]t was virtually unanimous that it is critical to involve the community at large in honest discussion on the bid as early in process as possible.”

For the 2008 bid team, the 1996 attempt was not wasted effort. At the very least the IOC has historically favoured repeat bidders. Yet, the 1996 bid was also instructive as it revealed the need to broker support at the local level as much as it required regional, national and international approval. For Bruce Kidd (1992), the silver lining of the 1996 bidding experience was the emergence of a social contract—the Toronto Olympic Commitment—which stressed the importance of a social impact assessment and the need to balance an economic agenda with social one. We might also reasonably conclude that

the 2008 bid would require an individual of Crombie’s stature and record if it had any chance of becoming more than an idea.

The 2008 Olympic bid

A full-scale public consultation process that was open to all of the city’s residents and the necessity of establishing support from all levels of government were the lessons to be learned from the failed 1996 bid. Crombie and others understood the challenges. For example, Ontario’s Premier Mike Harris pledged his support early in the 2008 Olympic bid process (Walker, The Toronto Star, 15 August 1996, A1), sending a message that provincial leadership would be there this time. Ironically, Harris sent confirmation around the same time that his government introduced cutbacks to amateur sport funding. At the municipal level, Crombie was well aware that there would be a lot of people who were involved in previous bids who would feel that they now knew how it should be done. While he did not want to disenfranchise these individuals, he maintained that the bid required a Toronto approach, or as he put it “one that was built from the ground up” (Crombie 2004a). The 2008 bid had to be different he claimed, “it had to be inclusive, it [couldn’t] be the old Rosedale, Forest Hill white folks…we had to certainly reflect the incredible exploding diversity of the city, that has been going on for a generation, two generations. Everybody had to have a real role, it had to be inclusive” (Crombie 2004a).

It is intriguing, then, to find that the Crombie-led group (BIDCO) decided to file a letter of intent with the COA without ever holding a public debate on whether Toronto should be putting forth a bid at all. Given this act-first approach, it is not surprising to find that the early newspaper reports about the 2008 Olympic bid were written with a
slant of skepticism. Several columnists conveyed a touch of a “here-we-go-again” mentality. Terence Corcoran (*The Globe and Mail* 26 July 1996, B2) penned the following view: “[w]ith the knowledge of absolutely nobody, an ad hoc cabal of Toronto-area politicians notified the Canadian Olympic Association that Toronto would be bidding to host the 2008 Olympic.” For Corcoran (*The Globe and Mail* 26 July 1996, B2), there is little doubt that “[t]he Olympic bid is a politically saleable commodity—a big brassy and high-profile megaproject that Toronto’s political elites love to rally around.” The problem, he explained was that the “political push” in Toronto had been continuously directed towards “grandstand-pleasing items of dubious value” (Corcoran, *The Globe and Mail* 26 July 1996, B2). Meanwhile, the private sector was fleeing the region. Adopting a similar tone, Colin Vaughan (*The Globe and Mail*, 29 July 1996, A5) opined, “[w]ithout first even trying to build a city-wide consensus, a faceless group of self-appointed civic do-gooders will meet in private and decide what’s best for us.” The tension between private and public control was picked up by columnist David Lewis who emphasized that the bid could not be left to “any self-appointed committee of private businessmen” (Lewis, *The Toronto Star*, 9 August 1996, A19). For Lewis (*The Toronto Star*, 1996, A19) this was the approach that had been tried with other sporting projects—such as the Skydome—and the results were disastrous. In his opinion, if the city were to go forward with an Olympic bid “it must rely on public resources and the expertise of the civil service” and at the end of the day he argues, “the benefits have to come to the public” (Lewis, *The Toronto Star*, 1996, A19).

The editor of *The Toronto Star* offered a more balanced perspective noting that when the IOC picked Atlanta over Toronto for the 1996 Olympic Games, “many
Torontonians yawned” (The Toronto Star, 31 July 1996, A16). While the editor does not discount the heavy media coverage that surrounded the 1996 bid, he maintains that Toronto was in the midst of a building frenzy, and the Olympics bid was just one project on the go in a city full of optimism. What the citizens could not have predicted, the editor writes, was the “debilitating recession that was around the corner” (The Toronto Star, 31 July 1996, A16). While not unabashedly promoting the Olympics, the editor recognized that Toronto’s interest in “global markets, international contacts, and opening our borders to the world” might make the area “ripe for another bid for the Games” (The Toronto Star, 31 July 1996, A16). The message was plain: Toronto could not afford to ignore the workings of the symbolic economy. But the editor also acknowledges that pursuing the Olympics was a risky proposition, noting that the bidders must be cognizant of the fact that they have to “court public opinion before wooing the IOC” (The Toronto Star, 31 July 1996, A16). At the same time, the editor argued that public support must be coupled by “a hard-nosed business team [which the editor identifies as including financial muscle, international contacts, technical know-how and diplomatic finesse] capable of convincing the IOC that Toronto has the capacity to stage the Games and the financial commitments to make the strict deadlines” (The Toronto Star, 31 July 1996, A16). The editor does not dismiss the tarnishing problems associated with the Games (massive costs, security expenses, corporate greed, local inconvenience, jingoistic fans) but argues that “in a world rife with ethnic, national and other conflicts, an event that brings together 11,000 of the world’s fastest, strongest and dedicated youths…can’t be all bad” (The Toronto Star, 31 July 1996, A16).
At the very least, the editor claimed, it was an idea worth exploring. Here we find that the symbolic power of Coubertin-style Olympism had been resurrected.

**Transforming an idea into image and infrastructure**

Having submitted their intention to the Canadian Olympic Association, the Crombie led bid team began the process of trying to generate local support and crafting a set of guiding principles that would govern the bid. In addition, the bid team still had to address the issue of where the games would be held. Crombie’s desire to provide a boost to the city’s waterfront would have to somehow mesh with Lastman’s (and others’) desire for a suburban site. In addition, the other GTA mayors would be seeking a piece of the venue plan. Yet, just as Crombie’s bid team began to try and negotiate the benefits of an urban versus a suburban concentration, the spatial struggle known as amalgamation took root.

Toronto’s 2008 Olympic bid arose at a politically significant moment in the city’s history. Municipal restructuring, instituted by the province’s Progressive Conservative government, culminated in the incorporation of the mega-city of Toronto in January of 1998. Just a few months later the newly formed mega-council had to negotiate whether to support ‘in principle’ a 2008 Olympic bid. One can safely assume that the Olympic file was just one of many on a long ‘things to do’ list for a municipal government. It had to reorganize its structures and responsibilities, and revamp its delivery of public services as well as its management of urban form.

For many Torontonians there was the sense that the imposed amalgamation threatened the participatory culture for which they had fought during the 1970s. In turn, the gains that the reformists made on issues such as “downtown residential vitality,
community development, public transit, public spaces, density and diversity” were thought to be at risk (Bourdeau 2005, 99). Fearful of the imposition of a “new neo-liberal socio-political elite” interest groups began to speak out against the call for amalgamation (Bourdeau 2005, 100). It was a battle that, although it was eventually lost, sapped the life out of many street level activists.

Intriguingly, part of the rational for the forced amalgamation was that it would give Toronto more international clout to attract foreign investment and to pursue events such as the Olympics. David Crombie used the occasion to place a positive spin on the Olympic bid arguing that “an Olympic bid is just the tonic Toronto needs to shake it from its postamalgamation doldrums…We’ve just created a new city. It’s time to look at the larger picture—not just a series of small ones” (Crombie quoted in Armstrong, The Globe and Mail, 31 March 1998, A8). The city’s Olympic Office relayed that same message suggesting that “[t]he Olympics [could] serve as a positive focal point in the creation of the new Toronto.” But many others, including former Toronto mayor, John Sewell, remained unconvinced. For Sewell (quoted in Walker, The Toronto Star, 24 August 1996, B5) “[g]etting a sense of direction by holding a major corporate sporting event [was] not the way to go.”

Operating in the shadows of amalgamation

There are only a handful of newspaper articles which mention Toronto’s Olympic bid during the entire 1997 calendar year, but each was significant. For instance, one order of business that did take place was a meeting between BIDCO and the Canadian Olympic Association’s Site Review Committee. Three different possibilities for Olympic venues and facilities had been proposed. One plan was quite similar to the 1996 bid with most of
the venues centered on the Canadian National Exhibition Grounds. It is important to keep in mind that despite the criticism that plagued the 1996 bid, it did earn extremely high marks for its technical plan from the IOC’s evaluation team. The second option was to decentralize and spread the Games across the entire GTA. The final idea was to develop a waterfront concept that would see the Games centralized along the city’s waterfront with a few pockets of concentration. Of the three options, the COA recommended that the Toronto waterfront concept be explored more fully. The COA was reaffirming the IOC’s desire to have the Olympics leave a tangible urban redevelopment legacy, a strategy the IOC ties to the grouping of venues and facilities.

Commenting on the site review visit, Jeff Evenson articulated that "[w]hat we have been told by the COA and by the people who advise us is, if we're going to stand a chance of winning (the Olympics), we're going to have to cluster this thing on the waterfront" (Evenson quoted in Buffery, The Financial Post, 20 November 1997). The waterfront concept was also said to have been supported by the numerous sport and national sport organizations (Evenson 2004). Evenson candidly remarked that a waterfront location was a certainty:

we had a game plan, it was always our idea from day one, it was always our idea to have the Olympics on the waterfront. We were the Waterfront Regeneration Trust. I was the director of Central Waterfront Projects. The point was to focus and concentrate, to build a project which concentrated people, money and ideas on the waterfront. But, if you are going to do something like that you have to triangulate it. You can’t run the flag up and say this is the only idea we have. If you bring everybody inside the
tent, if you are going to create a really big tent...you have to give people a hope, some reason to become involved.

In essence, Evenson acknowledges that there was a CNE Plan, a GTA plan and a waterfront concept, but he maintains that it was always the intention of Crombie and himself gradually to focus attention towards the waterfront. It is important to keep in mind that the initial letter which outlined Toronto’s intention to bid was drafted on Waterfront Regeneration Trust letterhead and the offices of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust were the epicenter of the bid’s early work (Evenson 2004).

**Community Outreach**

A second effort that took place in the shadows of the amalgamation debate was the launching of an informal community outreach plan. Both Crombie and Evenson admit that the initial efforts to mobilize support were not very structured. Relying heavily on word-of-mouth networking, BIDCO recruited support and expertise as needed. As Evenson (Evenson 2004) explains, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust had been in the business of trying “to knit together support for waterfront projects and to talk to an awful lot of people.” Evenson and Crombie were well connected to many organizations and community groups across Toronto, but they understood that the Olympic bid would require additional expertise.

If the bid were to progress beyond the simple task of paying political lip-service to notions of community involvement and honest discussion, then it would have to involve the various ethno-cultural communities, leaders of the various faith-based communities, labour representatives, and a host of other constituent groups in a more meaningful manner. In short, if the bid were going to be as Crombie declared, a Toronto
Olympic bid, then the man sometimes referred to as “Mr. Toronto” (Proudfoot, The Toronto Star, 7 March 1998, B5) would have to refine what he meant exactly by this statement. Could he build an image of the bid and a vision for the soon-to-be mega-city that would win widespread acceptance of those living in what is frequently touted as a city of neighbourhoods? Or was Crombie simply playing politics, “building support one person at a time” but “with each person in a different room” and never offering the opportunity to address whether or not the Olympics should be a project on the municipal agenda (Sewell, Now, 19-25 February 1998, 25)? At the very least, the intensity of the amalgamation debate indicated that defining a ‘Toronto vision’ was a demanding exercise. Defining an Olympic vision would be equally tough. The proposition of a Toronto Olympic bid seemed to require that BIDCO acknowledge two of the questions posed in an earlier chapter: “who is to define, manipulate, and profit from ‘the public’ today?” and “who is the subject of public space?” (Deutsche 1992, 44).

In retrospect, we find that the bid team never fully addressed these questions. Instead BIDCO circumvented the difficulty of dealing with questions regarding the composition of the public and meanings of public space by focusing their consultation efforts on establishing a series of principles behind the bid. Given that one of the legacies of the 1996 bid was the development of a social contract (mentioned above) it is not surprising that a set of five key principles emerged from the early consultation process had much in common with this contract. The principles that were deemed essential to Toronto’s 2008 bid were: (1) the need for inclusivity; (2) the importance of social responsibility; (3) an environmentally progressive agenda; (4) a sound financial plan; and (5) a lasting legacy for sport and culture (Crombie 2004a). There is evidence which
suggests that community groups’ concerns were taken seriously. For example, Jack Layton, a city councilor who had voted against the city’s 1996 bid was more optimistic about the approach BIDCO had taken commenting: “In the last year and a half there have been more meetings and discussions with front-line community agencies and community groups—even before the notion of proceeding with a bid is coming to council—than there were the last time in the entire process” (Layton quoted in Infantry, The Toronto Star, 24 February 1998, E4). It is obvious that Crombie was demonstrating his worth as a community consensus builder as he took the initiative to approach the social activists and community leaders first. At the same time, Crombie mentions that “it was hard for Michael [Michael Shapcott of Bread Not Circuses] to be mean to him” because “I wasn’t a corporate character” (Crombie 2004a). When asked about the development of the Olympic principles, Crombie happily and confidently reported “[t]hose principles were not imposed on people but [came] from people” (Crombie 2004a). While this achievement can and should be applauded we must recognize that attention to these principles still had to mesh with a very strict schedule of deadlines.

Having declared their candidacy via the letter to the Canadian Olympic Association, Crombie still had to convince the COA’s membership that Toronto should be put forth as Canada’s candidate for the international phase of the competition. The COA had a fixed date for the final decision, 17 April 1998. But, before BIDCO could promote Toronto to the COA, it had to win a city council resolution that would approve in principle the City’s intention to bid for the 2008 Games. And if this were not enough, the approval had to come from an amalgamated city council that would not even be formed until January 1st, 1998. This meant that BIDCO had less than four months to
execute two polished sales pitches to two very different political bodies, one concerned with municipal well being (City Council) and the other dedicated to the values of Olympism and the development of national sporting culture (the COA). 40

**An Olympic Waterfront in Toronto?**

Lost in the establishment of principles, the fervor of the amalgamation debate and the pressure of deadlines was a dedicated public discussion on what would be considered an acceptable site plan. Little sustained discourse on how the Olympic site plan could potentially alter the city’s stock and management of public land along its waterfront or elsewhere can be found in the bid team’s early work. One brief, prepared by Toronto’s Chief Urban Planner, Paul Bedford, does acknowledge the time crunch that the bid team was operating under and it did foreshadow the planning challenges posed by a waterfront games. In the brief, Bedford (1998) highlights three planning issues that demanded attention: (1) residential uses in the Port Industrial Area and East Bayfront; (2) The Proposed Exhibition Place Olympic venues and the Maple Leaf Gardens’ Proposal; and (3) Infrastructure Requirements. On the issue of residential development in the portlands, Bedford (1998) inserts his professional opinion in the following way, “[r]esidential development in the East Bayfront or the Port Industrial area is only feasible if it is of such a scale that [it] could financially justify a full range of services and amenities that would be required by the new residents.” He suggests that an Olympic athletes’ village could reflect such a project, but that it would require a high degree of political strategizing to make it happen. More broadly, Bedford (1998) explains, “[a] waterfront Olympics would enhance the special character of the waterfront and provide the City with unparalleled

40 I return to these two political pitches in Chapter Eight.
opportunities to achieve multiple city building objectives.” On the issue of infrastructure, Bedford (1998) reminded the bid team officials that there would be a growing “wish list of infrastructure improvements” or “add ons” linked to the Olympic bid but it was clear that the Olympic budget could not pay for such improvements.

Bedford (1998) emphasized that the 2008 bid needed to create distance from the 1996 bid by explaining “how a waterfront Olympic bid helps all of the new Toronto, not just the downtown or waterfront area.” The political strategy he recommended to BIDCO included: (a) the development of a political subcommittee; (b) holding immediate meetings between bid officials and industrial stakeholders in the Port; (c) the preparation of a land use, transportation and urban design study; (d) the scheduling of meetings with local Councilors who are part of boards and commissions (i.e. Canadian National Exhibition Board (CNE), Toronto Economic Development Corporation (TEDCO), Toronto Harbour Commission (THC)/Port Authority), Toronto Transit Corporation (TTC)), and (e) increasing city-staff liaison.

Bedford (1998) recommended that “[t]he City should not initiate Official Plan and Zoning by-law amendments to permit the Olympic village until there is a certain level of community and political buy-in attained for the proposal.” He further suggested that the first report(s) to Council remain “general and not site-specific”. He thought that it was best to emphasize that the “waterfront location is key to its [the bid’s] success”, that it results in “significant City-building opportunities which cannot be realized in such a short time without the bid” and that it can help achieve “multiple objectives (i.e. housing, jobs, greenspace).” At the same time, he suggested that the bid team adopt a reserved approach arguing that BIDCO should stress that “[t]he exact plans for venue and athletes’ and
media village locations are tentative at present and need to be finalized after extensive consultation with the stakeholders” and “[t]hat there will be an extensive consultation process with the various “publics” which is yet to occur” (Bedford 1998).

Reading Bedford’s brief it is obvious that he felt that the informal consultative efforts that BIDCO had performed, while a nice start, would need to be expanded considerably not only in terms of the number of groups consulted but also in time dedicated to the process. Crucially, Bedford (1998) reminded his colleagues that “[t]he “public” consists of several different types of groups with vastly different issues and concerns.” To demonstrate his point, Bedford (1998) includes the following list:

- community groups concerned about the impact on their communities;
- industrialists concerned about the impact on their industrial operations;
- social activists concerned about money spent on infrastructure instead of programs; and
- environmentalists concerned about the impact on the waterfront ecology.

Bedford’s brief clearly recognized that the production of the Olympic symbol in Toronto would have to accommodate the cultural politics of local economic development. He understood that using the Olympics to redevelop the waterfront would involve the monumental tasks of defining the public and the sorting out of spatial jurisdiction over waterfront land. Having invested much of his professional life in trying to plan Toronto’s waterfront, he recognized that the potential for conflict between industrial landowners and the Olympic goals of residential and sporting development was going to be high. His message was clear: if staging the Olympics was going to require the transformation of significant amounts of public waterfront land, then it was crucial that the bid team clarify
how this was in the public’s interest. As the next chapter illustrates, Toronto’s waterfront has long been a site of social struggle where diverse interests have voiced opinions, negotiated rights and placed demands using a variety of strategies, all in an attempt to lay their claim on the utilization of this space. Historically, the land fronting Lake Ontario has resisted privatization through the mechanism of government ownership or agencies entrusted with its public care. It has been a contentious process that has pitted powerful interests against one another. The result, as we shall see, has been the production of more consternation than consensus.
Chapter 8. Toronto’s Waterfront

John Dewey (1954 [1927], 136-137) once remarked that “the history of municipal politics shows in most cases a flare-up of intense interest followed by a period of indifference.” The competition over Toronto’s public waterfront land lends legitimacy to this statement. This chapter provides a brief history of the management of Toronto’s waterfront. It deliberately focuses on a few flash-points to illustrate that periodically Toronto’s citizenry awake to the value of this space and seek to (re)define it in their image. Historians of Toronto’s waterfront recognize, as Matthew Cooper (1999, 382) has, that Toronto’s waterfront is “not a naturally given phenomenon, a line neatly separating the land from Lake Ontario. Rather it is a historical and social product, and by no means a finished one.” I am cognizant of Desfor’s et al. (1988) claim that many studies on urban waterfronts are a-historical and spatially blinkered. By exploring the historical development of Toronto’s waterfront, focusing on periods of change (both proposed and actual) where different stakeholders sought to insert their influence in the shaping of this
significant urban public space, I aim to create a greater degree of sensitivity to the magnitude of the task that Toronto’s 2008 Olympic bid team faced.

For more than a hundred and fifty years, Toronto’s waterfront, Goheen (2003, 74) claims, has been “legally in the public domain but largely inaccessible.” This chapter demonstrates that this statement should be interpreted in two ways. First, the chapter reveals that for much of Toronto’s history, physical access to the waterfront has been constrained. Second, the chapter explains that as the city urbanized, an increased diversity of interests sought to lay claim to waterfront space. Here the issue is not specifically access to physical space but access to the decision-making process or the discursive realm of public debate. As we learned in an earlier chapter, the right to public space requires sensitivity to both of these interpretations.

A waterfront for the public?

When Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe arrived at the town of York (the City of Toronto was incorporated in 1834), in 1793, he imagined the site to be a key military defense post and colonial capital. With its protected harbour, its proximity to American soil and its position as a gateway to Ontario’s hinterland, York was blessed with a distinct locational advantage. The utility of Toronto’s harbour had long been recognized, serving as a gathering place, a junction between land and water for natives, and later as a fur trading depot for the French (Careless 1984). Upon Simcoe’s arrival, “[t]he best lands, adjacent to the harbour entrance at the western extreme of the “Island,” he ordered set aside as a military reserve. Land for the townsite was found near the mouth of the Don River on a low, unhealthy strand next to a dismal swamp” (Goheen 1970, 45). Goheen (1970, 46-47) informs us that the original townsite was surrounded by land
granted for government purposes, although “there was no plan for any public buildings” nor was there the provision of public space. Bordered by lands reserved for government purposes to the east and west and limited by the natural boundary of the lake to the south, the town was initially forced to grow north, as Goheen (1970) explains, onto privately held properties. More pointedly, Goheen (1970, 53) states, “Governor Simcoe’s land policies had, in effect, entrusted the city’s planning for the future to the judgment of a handful of landowners.” The results were mixed according to Goheen, with less publicly-spirited landowners producing uncoordinated and ragged development. It was a system of land allocation that “allowed the elite to directly control who lived where” (Sanford 1987, 19). Even those with a limited understanding of the Canadian urbanization process would not be surprised by Goheen’s (1970, 133) conclusion: “Toronto, like most other nineteenth century cities, grew under the guidance of speculative entrepreneurs on whose land and in whose image the city was largely built.” Less obvious though have been the ramifications of this style of speculative and haphazard growth on the pattern of public land ownership in the city, especially those lands that fronted the water.

In his analysis of Toronto’s nineteenth-century esplanade, Goheen (2000) reveals that the Crown had made provisions for a public walk or mall to be made available and accessible to the citizenry as early as 1818. Unfortunately, this decree was fraught with difficulties because at the time there was no body capable of protecting the public interest in this land (Goheen 2000). Without institutions capable of representing the public will, the government gave the open land along the harbour edge over to private individuals to act as its guardians (Careless 1984; Goheen 2000). This governmental decree—a better word might be blunder—marks a significant problem in Goheen’s opinion. He (Goheen
2000, 61) writes, “[i]n this confusion between stated principle and permitted practice were sown the seeds of the subsequent bitter conflict.” Rather than ensure that public interest was protected, those citizens entrusted with the protection of public land allowed private interests to exercise privilege there. When the land was granted to the City of Toronto shortly after its incorporation (1834), there was another opportunity to recognize the significant public value of this space. Yet, the leasing of the land to private interests by the City Council, as Goheen (2000, 63) illustrates, reflected the ongoing “pattern of appropriation of public rights for private interests.” A permitted takeover of the waterfront of the inner harbour by railway companies beginning in the 1850s provides the necessary evidence to support this claim. “In the absence of an effective public” Goheen (2000, 61) notes, the railway companies “found no obstacles to appropriating much of it [public land] for their own purposes.” The struggle over the right to build on the Esplanade was legitimated because public and private rights were muddled. It was a situation that favoured a business elite that sought to convince others that their interests and those of the general community coincided. For thirty years the railways enjoyed a relatively uncontested and privileged access to Toronto’s lakefront. The allure of the business opportunities the railways would bring to the city took precedence over the need to protect the public’s interest to public space (Goheen 2003). As Francis Mellen (1974, I-2) explains, “in the context of the times, it would have been rare to find anyone who did not equate the public good with the commercial growth and progressive prosperity predicted to accompany the railways.”

It is not until the 1880s that we find evidence indicating that the public was once again interested in Esplanade. By that time it had become clear that the city was willing
to turn its back on the public use of the waterfront. Nevertheless, when the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) sought to increase its land accommodations, they aroused the citizenry and ignited a new and lasting force in negotiations concerning Toronto’s waterfront—public opinion (Goheen 2000). Organizations such as the Board of Trade, the Toronto Trades and Labor Council and a newly formed Citizens Association\(^4\) began to challenge the railway’s unfettered use of Toronto’s Esplanade. They sought to add a new voice—that of the public—to negotiations over disputed land with the intent of “reinvesting the citizens with their old rights” (Goheen 2000, 69). Petitions and public meetings were the mechanisms of choice and careful reporting by the press ensured that various opinions were espoused. Goheen (2000; 2003) explains that the Toronto Trades and Labor Council and Citizens’ Association won the right to present their views before the Railway Committee of the Privy Council (the highest tribunal which adjudicated such matters). The verve of their position is captured by Goheen (2000, 71):

> [t]he representative of the Trades and Labor Council agreed, calling the waterfront ‘the only lung that we can lay claim to…We are deeply interested in this question, perhaps more so than any other portion of the community represented in this deputation, because we cannot, as a class, go away from the city to breathe the fresh air for any length of time.’

It was an astute, if not an entirely novel claim. Since the first tracks had been laid along the Esplanade, there had been concern over the amount of breathing spaces available to the citizenry. As Careless (1984) identifies, parks were not a significant concern before the rail industry and commerce took over the waterfront. Prior to the physical growth of

\(^4\) Goheen (2000, 69) explains that the Citizen Association was designed to be “comprised of a representative group of ratepayers … to watch carefully the interests of the city.”
the city that the railways facilitated, the wooded lands to the north of the city and the peninsula in the south could be exploited as a space of recreation and relaxation. Unfortunately, a storm in 1858 converted the peninsula into an island thereby making access a paying venture (via ferry). In addition, the increased population growth made the countryside more remote.42 As mentioned in an earlier chapter, the development of sport and social clubs (hunt and yacht clubs) by city’s wealthier citizenry allowed them to escape the constraining conditions of the city. The opportunity to visit the amusement park at Hanlon’s Point located on the Toronto Islands did provide one area of respite. The construction of a baseball/lacrosse stadium in 1897 at Hanlon’s Point also helped to draw citizens away from the city core.43 But for the lower classes, finding useable space for sport and leisure on the mainland was problematic. As Careless (1984, 97) writes, “Toronto began to look around for open public space within the town itself, to find there was practically none.” With park space at a premium the playing of sports was often prohibited. For many, “[t]he only area that really allowed for some free movement in play was the bay” (Beasley 1995, 8).

A fresh start? Toronto’s waterfront in the 20th Century

By the turn of the century, it was clear that the railways had become the culprit that prevented the citizenry from accessing the waterfront. The influence of the Muscular Christians combined with those sponsoring the objectives of the City Beautiful

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42 For a cartographic representation of Toronto’s growth see Harris and Luymes (1990).
43 The construction of the stadium on Hanlon’s point can be considered a mix blessing. Lawrence Solman, owner of city’s popular baseball team, the Toronto Maple Leafs Baseball Club, had invested money in the Toronto Ferry Company and by moving his team from Sunlight Park (see Chapter Four) to the stadium at Hanlon’s Point he could generate additional revenue.
Movement helped to draw attention to civic benefits of increased parkland and sporting spaces. In addition, more profit-driven entrepreneurs had recognized the economic potential of passive recreation. Despite the rapid growth in commercial and recreation interests, the city’s waterfront remained an industrial enclave where swimmers had to routinely compete with ships and sewage.

The editor of *The Globe*, confidently outlined the problem:

> the Dominion and the Provinces have been unpardonably negligent in allowing the foreshores of navigable waters to pass into private hands. Railway companies have been accorded powers of expropriation quite as comprehensive as their needs warrant. Urban municipalities, on the other hand, have not been given expropriation powers sufficient to enable them to cope with railway aggression… If it is possible for a railway to claim the waterfront and shut Toronto off from the navigable highway on which it is located Toronto should have power to expropriate that waterfront. That no such power exists is due to the familiar habit of neglecting public and serving private interests. (*The Globe*, 2 December 1909, 6)

Crucial to the above description though, is whether or not waterfront land could be managed less acrimoniously if it was indeed expropriated from the railways. As Goheen (2004, 3) explains “[b]y the early twentieth century the waterfront presented two challenges to the body responsible for its management: it was subject to competing claims for its use and enjoyment; and there were no agreed and indisputable principles according to which the legitimacy of claims could be adjudicated.” David Scobey’s (2002, 144) study of New York City’s nineteenth century waterfront addresses the
circumstances relevant to Toronto: “[h]ere was a classic prisoner’s dilemma: the aggregate pursuit of divergent interests stalemated collective action… Everyone had a stake in “dock reform,” but a different stake.” It had become obvious that “[c]ity governments everywhere had proven incapable of being able to administer public space” (Goheen 2004, 2). In Toronto, the result was a push by the Toronto Board of Trade to transfer city services out of the hands of political leaders and into the administrative control of specialists44 (Merrens 1988; Goheen 2004). The goal was to create a new management body—the Toronto Harbour Comission—that that would be “insulated from incapable and corruptible politicians” (Goheen 2004, 4).

**The Toronto Harbour Commission**

Examinations of the Toronto Harbour Commission have generated some of the most thoughtful and penetrating insights into development and management of Toronto’s waterfront.45 Preceded by the Commissioners of the Harbour of Toronto (commonly referred to as the Harbour Trust) and replaced by the currently operating Toronto Port Authority (1999 to present), the Toronto Harbour Commission has been the institutional body with responsibility for Toronto’s waterfront. As mentioned, by the turn of the twentieth century, Toronto’s waterfront appeared disregarded. With the railways succeeding in connecting Toronto to a greater hinterland, Toronto’s influence took on an outward character. While we cannot deny the importance of the railways to Toronto’s

44 In a chapter entitled “The Toronto Tradition”, Harold Kaplan (1982,620) notes that the first few decades of the twentieth century, a number of groups including the Board of Trade, The Globe and the Bureau of Municipal Research all tried to “rationalize the city’s bureaucracy, which meant grouping agencies in departments, centralizing staff services … appointing professionals to senior administrative positions.”

45 Michael Moir, the former archivist for the Toronto Harbour Commission Archives has usefully written about the contents (and possibilities) for future scholarly research given the wealth of printed and graphic materials that the archives contains. See Moir 1988.
competitive standing, we must recognize that inter-urban jousting with cities like Montreal and Hamilton was still significantly influenced by the standing of their ports.

While the Board of Trade had previously lent its support to the railway companies, the obvious inefficient and decrepit state of the harbour industry—and likely financial loss—led the organization to turn its view and influence southward to the water’s edge and the civic property located there. As Merrens (1988, 93) reminds us, the Board of Trade was “the most active and effective organization in the city’s business community, [and] was dedicated to fostering the economic growth of Toronto.” Reading the newspapers we find that the merits of a good harbour became the subject of Board of Trade boosterism. Healthy competition over freight rates, greater commercial access to the waterfront, improved waterborne shipping, a reconfigured industrial base, and other benefits were linked to an effective harbour. A laundry list of all things undesirable about the state of the waterfront could also be found: poor wharfage accommodation, shallow water, massive rail shunting yards, difficult entrance channels and industrial sewage. The word handicapped was used to describe the inadequacy of Toronto’s shipping facilities and the port was referred to as a disgrace. Combined, these factors provided the impetus for the Board of Trade’s call for a scientifically managed harbour commission. The Globe carefully reported the meetings and aims of the Board of Trade in its pages:

Whereas the Board of Trade of the city of Toronto consider the control of the waterfront in and contiguous to Toronto is essential to the commercial development of the city, and whereas no satisfactory plan of development can be devised and carried out without permanent concentration of authority, and whereas the proper development of the waterfront will
enrich the city many millions by enhancing the actual value of its property in Ashbridge’s Bay and elsewhere, be it therefore resolved that this meeting most strongly urges placing the management of our waterfront in the hands of a commission.

(*The Globe*, 15 April 1910, 9)

It was reported that the Toronto Board of Trade was “looking to give a practical direction to the consensus of the general public” (*The Globe*, 9 March 1910, 6).

The notion of a new authority to govern the waterfront was something that the editors of the *The Globe* and *The Toronto Daily Star* could agree on. Where their (and presumably their readers’) opinions divided, however, was on the matter of who would comprise this harbour commission. The proposal to have a five person commission, three members to be appointed by the City of Toronto and two individuals by the Governor in Council (with one of these appointments being made on the recommendation of Toronto’s Board of Trade) did not sit well with the editor of *The Toronto Daily Star*. He argued that the formation of a trust with Government representatives on it reflected an “alienation of…civic property from direct elective control” (*The Toronto Daily Star*, 3 Dec 1910, 6). Elsewhere he commented that the estimated value of the city’s waterfront property was in the neighbourhood of 4.5 million dollars. He saw no reason to establish a harbour trust or commission with government involvement until, the latter provided concrete assurances that a grant was forthcoming (*The Toronto Daily Star*, 8 Dec 1910, 8). He asked his readers: “[d]o you wish to hand over your waterfront to a trust not directly responsible to yourselves, on the supposition, unsupported by evidence, that the Government may someday make a large grant for harbor improvement” (*The Toronto
Daily Star, 8 Dec 1910, 8)? Until the Government pledged material assistance, the editor recommended that the city hold onto to its civic assets and consider the development of a harbour department.

In contrast, the editor for The Globe claimed that the Harbour Commission could bring change, a prospect it thought “quite impossible if the City Council retains direct control of the property” (The Globe, 21 Nov 1910, 6). There was of course, a poor record of the city accommodating the claims of the citizenry to the public lands on the waterfront. Determining that indeed a transfer of responsibility was in order, the editor argued that “[a] commission would have no influence with the Government without a Government representative on it” (The Globe, 2 Dec 1910, 1). He reminded his readers that if the Board of Trade’s proposal was adopted, the city would always have three representatives in the harbour commission committee, thereby ensuring that the “property interests of the citizenry would be protected” (The Globe, 21 Nov 1910, 6).

The matter was put to Toronto’s electorate and in January of 1911 the citizenry voted affirmatively to the question: “[a]re you in favour of the control and development of Ashbridge Bay and the waterfront in the city’s interests by a commission having a majority of its members appointed by the city?” (The Toronto Daily Star, 29 December 1910, 8). The editor for The Toronto Daily Star, licking his wounds, suggested that the citizens had become enticed by “the magic word “development” rather than by the proposition to hand the business over to a commission” (The Toronto Daily Star, 3 Jan 1911, 12).

From the above discussion we clearly see two political processes at work. The first reflects the negotiation of political turf between the City of Toronto and a higher
order of government. What made the Toronto Harbour Commission (THC) unique was that it was a national commission, created by national legislation, yet was required to report to Toronto’s local city council. Desfor (1993, 170) points out that, “[i]t is [was] the only harbour commission in Canada where the majority of members are [were] appointed by a municipal government and, in addition, the City [could] appoint its elected councilors to the board.” The second process points to the role of public opinion especially as it relates to its influence on municipal governments. To speak of waterfront access during the railway period, according to Cooper (1993, 161) literally meant “physical reachability” and the citizenry had placed their desire for access in the hands of a new commission.

While it is possible to celebrate the THC’s ability to address the ineptness of the city politicians, it is worthy to consider how it may have affected the role of the citizenry in the process of negotiating rights to public resources, including public land (Goheen 2004). For Goheen (2004, 4, 8) the answer is clear as the new harbour commission was “designed to be a non-political body secure from political interference” and ultimately “out of reach of the public”. In more detail, Goheen (2004, 2) explains:

[i]he urban public, or publics, had perfected the art of lobbying city politicians; it was a sort of ballet in which the politicians and public understood their parts. Suddenly, the public and the politicians were excluded from participating in decisions that would determine the services available to them.

While the transfer of responsibility expressed the public’s urgency to get something done on the waterfront, it simultaneously reduced their agency.
The powers granted to the Commission were extensive. As Desfor (1993, 171) informs us, the THC “has the power to develop, regulate and control the use of land and property on the waterfront; it was given the right to borrow directly from banks; and to acquire, expropriate, sell and lease real estate.” From its inception it was far more than a “harbour minding body” (Merrens 1988, 93). While gaining control of waterfront land was the commission’s first priority, its greatest task would be trying to protect the rights of the public to public lands while simultaneously increasing the amount of industrial development to complement the ongoing population and commercial growth of the city. To accommodate these objectives, the commission developed a comprehensive Waterfront Development Plan that proposed both industrial and non-industrial use of the waterfront. For instance, one could read the inclusion of a proposed bathing beach, lake front walks and paths, a public square, park areas and the completion of a viaduct in the Waterfront Development Plan as direct attempts to regain the confidence of the public. Meanwhile, the commission also sought to claim portions of the waterfront for industrial purposes by outlining a series of lake front infillings. For example, the development plan outlined the filling in of Ashbridge’s Bay marsh which had been granted to the city from the Province in 1880. This was a major infrastructure project that would see the creation of 1,300 acres of land to be used principally for industrial purposes (Reeves 1992).

The specifics of the THC’s Plan have been documented elsewhere.\textsuperscript{46} For present purposes it is enough to recognize that the Harbour Commission’s 1912 Waterfront Plan was designed to place Toronto amongst “the great cities of the world” (Reeves 1992, 69) with industrial land development acting as the corner stone of the plan. As two massive dredges—the Cyclone and Tornado—took up what must have seemed like permanent\footnote{See Reeves (1992)}
residence in the harbour, reclaimed land slowly became dotted with companies catering to coal processing, ice storage, metal fabrication, sewage treatment, oil and gas, putting up silos, storage tanks, grain elevators and other industrial architecture. The transformation that was occurring on the waterfront was often celebrated. For example, the THC’s property manager, William B. Eagen, could be heard evincing enthusiasm about their accomplishments, proudly announcing that “where blue-green waters of Lake Ontario washed in 1914, “today there are 75 industrial establishments, with upward of 5,000 employees at work on a section of these reclaimed properties” (The Globe, 14 April, 1932, 13). This success was laced with tension, however, because the overall percentage of land that became occupied represented only a small fraction of what was available. The result was that the Harbour Commission often turned to the selling of land to help offset rising costs and to help fund further redevelopment projects (Desfor 1993).

While industrial development was the THC’s primary focus, its most popular development was the creation of Sunnyside Amusement Park. Opened in June 1922, Sunnyside was a two mile pleasure ground at the west end of the city’s harbour that catered to the desires of the growing leisure class. The substantial crowds that visited Sunnyside could choose between a host of activities, concessions, and spectacles that were offered at the midway, boardwalk and beach. The massive Sunnyside Bathing Pavilion offered patrons clean and guarded water to swim in. The rides at the midway delighted children and adults alike. The beach provided a valuable space of escape. Unlike the amusement park that was in operation at Hanlon’s Point, Sunnyside allowed visitors the convenience of being able to drive to their destination. The mainland attraction quickly became the destination of choice with newspaper reports indicating that
the crowds at Sunnyside were large and diverse. The park provided a degree of social mixing that did not exist on the city’s streets, although class divisions were still evident. For instance, the boardwalk quickly became a site where people promenaded in their best clothes and the midway was dubbed the “poor man’s riviera” (Beasley 1995, 82).

As with Hanlon’s Point, the THC seized upon the growing popularity of sporting culture and built a baseball diamond to the east of the midway and later built permanent bleachers to accommodate the collection of gate monies. The sharing of revenue with many of the leagues, especially the Women’s softball league, caused many teams to request playing privileges at Sunnyside Stadium (Kidd 1996; Hall 2002). During the late 1920s and early 1930s, women’s softball at Sunnyside routinely drew more paying spectators than men’s softball or lacrosse. This was valuable revenue for the THC which had struggled to lease much of the industrial and commercial land located in the central and eastern waterfront areas.

The THC “made a point of advertising the fact that Sunnyside was built for and used by the citizens of Toronto” (Beasley 1995, 81). The design decisions and behavioural restrictions (i.e. length of bathing suits, no public kissing, no alcohol, closed on Sundays) helped to “present a wholesome image” and met the moral standards of the citizenry (Beasley 1995, 125). At the same time, however, the THC recognized the tourist potential of the site noting:

[t]he harbour commissioners have always had in mind that Sunnyside will not only be a continuing and increasing joy to the citizens of Toronto, but that it will become the playground of the one million people who live in the central portion of the province of Ontario and that it will attract to this
city the tourist traffic, which, we all agree, we must have. (THC
Chairman, Home Smith, quoted in Beasley 1995, 91)

In many ways, Sunnyside was an early step for the city’s embracement of the symbolic
economy.

While Sunnyside helped the THC claim that they could protect the public’s rights
to public lands it was equally clear that the THC had pushed “recreational uses to the
periphery” (Cooper 1993, p. 162). Although the commercial and recreational success of
Sunnyside was considerable, shifts in recreational pursuits, constraints on disposable
income (i.e. the influences of the Depression era), competition from other sporting
facilities as well as the constant need to upgrade the amusements and attractions at
Sunnyside, ensured that THC would continue to emphasize industrial development. Even
with much industrial land laying fallow there remained a legitimate belief that “Toronto’s
second century [would] be measured by its port activities” (The Globe, 30 August 1934,
6). The Harbour Commission frequently reminded the citizenry that there was new life on
the horizon. A completed Welland Canal, the potential for a small island airport and the
possible opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway provided the necessary jolt of confidence.

**Toronto’s second century: to see a way forward and
express a way out**

By 1950, Toronto’s waterfront “bore little resemblance to the pleasant harbor of a
hundred years earlier” (Cooper 1993, p.163). The edge of the water was now hundreds of
meters south of the original shoreline as the series of infillings conducted by the THC
extended the city into the lake. Even the Harbour Commission’s building had been landlocked by the series of lake fillings (Figures 8.1-8.3).

Figure 8.1. Toronto's waterfront prior to infilling. Note the Harbour Commission's building at the water's edge. (Source: http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/English/centennial/big/big_15_toronto.htm, McCarthy Aero Services Limited, McCarthy Aero Services fonds)
Figure 8.2. Aerial view of the Toronto Harbour Commission Building, Postal Delivery Building and the central business district looking north, 1949 (Source: Archives of Ontario, Digital Image Digital Image Number: I0020260.JPG)

Figure 8.3. Aerial view of railway lands and waterfront in Toronto, looking east from Spadina Avenue, 1949 (Source: Archives of Ontario, Digital Image Number: I0020255.JPG)
Once the THC’s 1912 Waterfront Development Plan objectives had been outlined, an intervening incubation period ensued. The Second World War and the onset of suburbanization diverted attention and the waterfront lapsed into stasis. As Kaplan (1982, 633) indicates, following World War II, “waves of immigration from continental Europe suddenly transformed Toronto from a homogeneous British Protestant city, united in its social mores and political beliefs, to a polygot mosaic, no longer certain of what it agreed on.” The city had begun to shed it Victorian sensibilities and the THC did little to remedy the confusion over the public’s increasingly fragmenting expectations of the landscape. With a population swelling to more than one million by 1951, the difficulty of establishing a direction for waterfront (re)development became increasingly muddled as new voices offered their input and claimed a right to help define the future space.

A good deal of scholarly research has been dedicated to explaining how Toronto sought to balance local and regional issues that sprouted in the post-war period. The mere fact that the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto came into being in 1953 provides some indication that growth politics were unsettled. The need for infrastructure/service support for residential development (particularly in the outer districts), the increasing traffic congestion (especially in the downtown area); and the unequal distribution of property tax revenues helped spur the creation of the new layer of government (Frisken 2001). The difficulty of moving people in and out of the city affected the waterfront directly when the first chairmen of the Metro government, Frederick Gardiner, decided to support (in 1955) the building of a lakefront expressway. In less than a decade there was a mass of concrete pillars and platforms that stretched its way across the entire southern edge of the city. The expressway would become Toronto’s second physical, and as some
suggest, a psychological barrier to the lake. The significance of the elevated expressway cannot be understated as it ushered in an ideal of land use specialization. At ground level the results were striking: “It [the expressway] transformed an enormous part of the waterfront area into a transmission belt for cars. It destroyed Sunnyside Beach Amusement Park⁴⁷, blocked off the Canadian National Exhibition (which has been in decline ever since), and cast a shadow over dozens of downtown streets” (Fulford 1995, 63). Gardiner’s infatuation with infrastructure meant that “Sunnyside and other nightspots along the western beaches were sacrificed to an ever-changing, ever-demanding modernity” (Adams 1994, 223). The result was that citizens were given parking lots not parks.

Meanwhile, the industrial prospects of the THC continued to evaporate and interest charges increased on their capital investments. To curtail the problem, the THC turned to the selling of land (Desfor 1993). The press followed the THC’s activities closely and snubbed them for “continuing to take pride in the rapid disposal of the remaining vacant land on the waterfront” (The Globe and Mail, 4 July 1953, 6). The editor for The Globe and Mail was particularly vocal, and he drew attention to the jurisdictional obstacles that had emerged. In the words of the editor, “[t]o make a complete job of planning for the Metropolitan area, with its twenty-eight to thirty miles of shore line, the Metropolitan authorities should consider proposals to Ottawa to revamp the Harbour Commission’s jurisdiction” (The Globe and Mail, 28 April 1955, 6). Having made the basic argument, the editor then explains why the Harbor Commission’s role should be reduced:

⁴⁷ It is ironic that Torontonians’ love of the automobile originally helped to make Sunnyside an attractive amusement option but later sealed its fate.
truck services already have taken over much of the business formerly handled by the railways…In seeking amendments to the powers of the existing Harbor Commission efforts also should be made to remove from its jurisdiction the lands it now administers which have no present or future use for harbor purposes. The commission has got itself into the real estate business as an independent entity, with incidental functions as amusement entrepreneurs and as an industrial commission in respect of some of this land. These situations should be ended, and the Harbor Commission confined to its basic functions of development and management of harbor facilities. *(The Globe and Mail, 28 April 1955, 6)*

In effect, the editor had foreshadowed a number of themes that would ultimately revamp the role and image of the THC.

**Acrimonious Agency**

Deciding whether or not to build, how to manage and how to distribute the concoction of expressways, subways, industrial parks, commercial development, suburban residences, airports and other necessities/amenities that were linked to postwar Fordist boom was a laborious process. The newspapers diligently recorded the festering of opinions that were raised on issues such as public housing, sprawl, slum clearance and pollution. While close attention to how exactly policy decisions unfolded during the period is beyond the scope of this chapter48, the underlying premise is that planning for Toronto’s future became a “divided responsibility” (Frisken 2001, 518). This shared chore extended to the challenge of waterfront development. For example, a newly created

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48 See Frisken 2001; Donald 2002; and Lemon 1996.
Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board (MTPB) recommended that both a Waterfront Advisory Committee and a Waterfront Technical Committee be created. At the administrative level, one could read this suggestion as an acknowledgement that new directions were on the cusp for the waterfront (Desfor et al. 1989). The opening sentence of the planning board report, *towards a Waterfront Plan: Report on the Need for a Long Range Waterfront Plan from Clarkson to Carruthers Creek*49 (Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board 1961, 1), captures the mood of the period:

> [e]veryone conscious of Toronto’s location on the shore of Lake Ontario must from time to time regret the amount of separation between the lakeshore and the urban hinterland, and be concerned with the lack of public access to the shore both from the built up area and from the yet undeveloped lands.

In an effort to carve a path forward the report recommended that consideration be given to the development of an independent authority that would have the ability to plan and implement a new long term planning strategy for Toronto’s waterfront. In practical terms, there was the expressed desire to replace the 1912 Waterfront Plan with a new set of objectives. The report noted that “[w]ithin the City of Toronto the Harbour Commissioners own and control the major part of the lakefront” (Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board 1961, 39) but maintained that “[t]here is no existing agency which is completely equipped, politically or technically, to deal positively with all the matters of a waterfront plan” (Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board 1961, 43). The report crystallized the assumption that the THC could not adequately draft a new long range plan on its own. A new set of political contours were being forged by a myriad of voices that included

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49 Hereafter, *towards a waterfront plan*
civic representatives, the railway companies, the THC, the Metropolitan Toronto Regional Conservation Authority (MTRCA), the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), the Metropolitan Board of Trade, amongst others (Reeves 1993, 82). With the shape and the character of the waterfront at stake, public and private interests sought to press their influence. “The multiplicity of interests involved” Desfor et al. (1989, 489) inform us, “contrasted sharply with the city’s earlier era of waterfront development, during which the planning and development were united under the authority of the Toronto Harbour Commission.” At the risk of oversimplifying the point, the THC lost its role as the authority over waterfront space as a regional approach to waterfront planning gathered momentum.

When the force of the 1912 waterfront plan sputtered, the THC attempted to demonstrate its flexibility and resiliency, by attempting to work with the city’s new planning board. The result was the production of a large scale “face lifting” scheme for the Toronto Islands that included a tunnel to the Toronto Islands, an island boulevard and the relocation of the Sunnyside amusement area to Muggs Island. A striking feature of this new plan was the inclusion of a possible sports centre and regatta course on the Islands: “the possible scene for the Olympic Games” (The Globe and Mail, 13 September 1951, 15). It is here that we find that the seeds for hosting the Olympic Games in Toronto were first sown.

The notion that Toronto could play host to the Olympic Games was not simply fanciful thinking. In 1954, Toronto Mayor Allan Lamport, aided by Robert Saunders of the Canadian Olympic Association, visited the International Olympic Committee in Athens, Greece to request that Toronto be given the honour of staging the 1960 Olympic
Games (*The Globe and Mail*, 9 April 1954, 59). Mayor Lamport’s bid for the Games was bolstered by supporting letters from Prime Minister St. Laurent and Ontario Premier Leslie Frost (*The Toronto Daily Star*, 15 May 1954). It was political enthusiasm that was not unanimously shared. For instance, the editor of *The Toronto Star*, (11 May 1954, 6) was critical of Lamport’s mission, suggesting that “[r]elief, not disappointment should prevail if the International Olympic committee rejects Toronto’s bid.” The editor questioned the “unconsidered zeal” and “lack of frankness” that characterized the undertaking and expressed concern over the true cost and timing of the initiative. In the editor’s estimation, the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway would provide the catalyst that Toronto was seeking, confidently concluding that, “[g]reatness…is being thrust upon us: we do not have to chase after it” (*The Toronto Daily Star*, 11 May 1954, 6).

The Olympic vision did, however, prove to be a stimulant of a different sort. It was the process of Olympic imagineering that provided much of the impetus for the creation of *towards a Waterfront Plan* (Reeves 1993, 102). This link is corroborated in the pages of *The Toronto Daily Star*, which traced the efforts of a young architect named Ross Anderson who had designs on revamping Toronto Islands through parklands and community development. Mr. Anderson promoted the Olympics as one strategy to kick-start the city’s redevelopment efforts. *The Toronto Daily Star*, credits Mr. Anderson as being “the unwitting instrument behind the first comprehensive study of the needs of the lakeshore from Pickering to Clarkson” (*Westall, The Toronto Daily Star*, 9 December 1960, 7). In detailing Mr. Anderson’s plan, columnist Stanley Westall draws attention to the city’s lack of sporting infrastructure (especially those of international standards). But more importantly, Westall (*The Toronto Daily Star*, 16 August 1960, 7) posed the critical
question: “[d]o we want the Olympics?” A partial response would be provided in *towards a Waterfront Plan*. The grandeur of an Olympic Games in Toronto was singled out in the report as being too lavish a consideration in the absence of a long term waterfront plan. The report summarized the matter in the following manner:

> [a]ssuming the necessary finances are made available and there is sufficient, sustained local enthusiasm for an Olympics enterprise, should that be allowed to dominate all other considerations for lakefront development? To ask this question does not mean it is an undeserving cause to bring the Olympic Games to Toronto or that it would be physically impossible to construct all the sports facilities planned…Yet in the absence of any general, long term plan for the waterfront the sheer size of an Olympics project would leave very little time for thought or money for other equally worthwhile ventures (quoted in Reeves 1992, 78).

The Olympic strategy as an incubator for waterfront redevelopment was never firmly rejected. It took the decision of the Canadian Olympic Association to pin Canada’s hopes on Montreal’s bid for the 1968 Olympics to bring “a degree of closure to Metro’s planning process” (Reeves 1992, 102).

The Olympic dream, like many of the late 1960s waterfront redevelopment projects that the city contemplated, never materialized. Nevertheless, these projects, with their proposed office towers, marinas, high-rise apartments, pedestrian walkways, cultural centers, sporting facilities, and parks, offered something different to Torontonians. In particular, they “signified that business interests had begun to perceive that waterfront redevelopment for non-industrial purposes could be profitable” (Desfor et
al. 1989, p.490). For internationally renowned developers such as Paul Reichmann and Olympic and York Developments Ltd., successful projects such as the twenty-five story Toronto Star building at the base of Yonge Street were emblematic of a new waterfront era. For Reichmann the way forward was clear: “the future of the waterfront lies in office buildings, hotels, recreational and commercial facilities, not industrial development” (The Toronto Daily Star, 17 June 1969, 2). The province shared this view, and helped to challenge the image of Toronto’s industrial waterfront through the creation of Ontario Place, an exhibit, entertainment and amusement complex that catered to day trippers.\(^{50}\) Unfortunately, individual projects such as Ontario Place were not very successful in helping the local citizenry’s development of a more meaningful social attachment to the waterfront. The blend of amusement and asphalt did not help them rediscover the nuanced meanings of public access. Nevertheless, these projects were emblematic of a larger infatuation with urban recreational and cultural facilities that many cities across the country and continent had turned to for economic resurgence. In Toronto, the list included the Ontario Science Center (1969), the St. Lawrence Center for Performing Arts (1969), the Metro Toronto Zoo (1974), the CN Tower (1976), a revamped Exhibition Stadium (1977), the Art Gallery of Ontario (1977) and the newly located Metropolitan Toronto Library (1977). In addition, the possibility of hosting the Olympics never fully went away. For example, Metro Chairman William Allen linked Metro’s waterfront development plan to Toronto’s bid for the 1976 Olympic Games (The Globe and Mail, 18 July 1968, 5). Allen emphasized that a winning bid would secure a world class stadium, would provide housing in Ashbridge Bay and would spark the creation of a large scale

\(^{50}\) Ontario Place has been described by many as Toronto’s consolation prize for having lost Expo ’67 to Montreal.
residential building project. It was a style of wishful enthusiasm that the previous Metro chairman, Frederick Gardiner, had nixed. For Gardiner, high profile events such as the World’s Fair and the Olympics were distractions to the process of real city building measured in terms of steel laid and concrete poured.

Examined together, the above projects signified a “challenge [to] the prevailing planning ethos based on the radical separation of land uses” (Greenberg 1996, 197). At the same time they also prompted tense discussions on basic planning questions relating to issues of scale, density, the amount of public open space, transportation infrastructure, parking requirements, tax revenues, bylaws, building heights, land transfers and so on. For Greenberg (1996), the litany of redevelopment projects exposed the difficulties of waterfront development and highlighted: (1) the complex role of planning; (2) the delicate balance between the creation of a super agency and a democratic planning process; (3) the uncertain roles of public and private sectors; and most importantly (4) the agency of a waterfront plan. The result was that by the end of the decade, the singular voice of the THC had been replaced by “39 agencies with jurisdiction on the Metro waterfront” (The Globe and Mail, 17 April 1970, 6). It had become clear that the THC’s grip on waterfront development had subsided as “the previously unquestioned hegemony of the industrial sector over the waterfront was challenged” (Greenberg 1996, 197). With the legitimate use of the waterfront being mulled over by a myriad of agencies, the waterfront for the first time in decades became—borrowing Greenberg’s (1996) delightful phrase—a “terrain of availability”. It is important to remember, however, that the THC still controlled the land.
The post-fordist waterfront: A terrain of availability?

In a 1971 article chronicling Toronto’s waterfront, Ken Greenberg and Roy Merrens (1971, 41), commented: “Toronto represents a city alienated from its waterfront.” Not only had the waterfront failed to become a civic resource, many residents had no idea where it was nor what was there (Greenberg & Merrens 1971). Suburbanites, in particular, were singled out as being “oblivious of the waterfront” largely because it played “no part in their working lives or recreational habits” (Greenberg & Merrens 1971, 42). The citizenry had literally turned their backs to the lakeshore, a reality that was evident both through lack of use and poor attendance at planning meetings. More problematic for Greenberg and Merrens (1971) though was the absence of public concern over emerging development plans that sought to dramatically transform the character of the waterfront. According to these authors (Greenberg & Merrens 1971, 41) the waterfront had “gradually become a hiatus in public consciousness” making it difficult to “formulate effective criteria for its exploitation as a public resource, or to generate citizen discussion of these criteria.” For the editor of The Globe and Mail, the high degree of public apathy was predictable. The jurisdictional squabbling between municipal, provincial and federal representatives as well as private interests (i.e. the Canadian National Railways, the Canadian Pacific Railway, the province, the Canadian National Exhibition, Metro Toronto, the City of Toronto, and the THC (still a city-federal board)) over the right to define the lakefront threatened any sense of local autonomy. The editor was convinced that for many redevelopment projects,
the local citizenry, when faced with “peering up from under five levels of government”, would be “neutralized as a participant” (The Globe and Mail, 17 March 1970, 6).

To combat the growing concern over the city’s loss of authority over the waterfront, Toronto city council asked their planners to draft a report indicating how waterfront development on the whole might proceed. The response by the planning staff, after a year of deliberation, was that there were simply too many projects and too little public discussion for them to formulate a way forward (The Globe and Mail, 3 April 1970, 5). Meanwhile, a series of commercial high-rises had been erected on land formerly owned by the THC. It was the creation of this concrete curtain that helped many citizens to refocus their gaze on the waterfront. By this time, it was clear that the expansion of the city, both physically and socially, had made the need for a new vision for the waterfront not only crucial but excruciatingly difficult. The intertwining of regional and local planning proved cumbersome, often pitting middle class interests against corporations and councils. While the waterfront had become a hiatus, Toronto’s middle class had defended their own neighborhoods with zeal, resisting central city redevelopment and expressway construction and in the process demanded increased citizen participation in the planning process both at the local and regional levels. The power of this constituency helped usher in a reform council in the early 1970s and David Crombie served as mayor. Under Combie’s guidance a reform-oriented majority also took control of the board of the THC. This effectively halted the THC’s disposition of land for nearly a decade, thereby curbing the southward expansion of the financial district towards the lake (Goldrick 1978). Although the reform council would be eradicated by the end of the decade, Toronto’s middle-class had found their collective voice. The struggle by
Residents to insulate the use-value of their neighbourhoods helped make the planning process far more participatory than in the previous decades. While Toronto was still defined as a ‘city that worked’, the city’s shifting occupational structure towards a service-based economy would ensure that demand for central city land would remain high. It also meant that neighbourhoods with strongly organized interest groups would pursue protectionist strategies to ensure that intensification did not occur in their backyards. With a growing number of service-oriented workers seeking a closer connection between work and residence, the waterfront, with its absence of an organized residentially-based constituency, was positioned as the logical ‘frontier’ for growth to be accommodated (Desfor et al. 1989). While city planners and developers were keen to crack the industrial mold that characterized and prevented the southward expansion of the city, they still had to negotiate with the principle holders of waterfront land: the THC, the national railways as well as a new institution called Harbourfront.

**Harbourfront: Whose harbour?**

Originating as a gift during Pierre Trudeau’s 1972 federal election campaign, Harbourfront was a parcel of land along the central waterfront that was supposed to be a waterfront park, “created by the Government of Canada … to protect the waterfront from commercial exploitation” (Desfor et al. 1989, 495). Unlike its heavily developed neighbor, Harbour Square, Harbourfront was intended to be an oasis of green space in an area dominated by warehouses, mills, and rail yards. In reality, this politically motivated donation turned out to be a “political football” (Cooper 1999, 382) and helped convert Toronto’s waterfront into a landscape of consumption. The problems with Harbourfront—and the corporation created to manage it—were numerous. For example,
the Federal Government had assembled, purchased and donated the land but had not intended to pay for its upkeep. The challenge of self-sustainability plagued Harbourfront from the beginning and stimulated a decade of deliberation the ultimately resulted in the site becoming a mixed-use blend of cultural, residential and commercial functions. As Greenberg (1996, 210) explains: “with no commitment to public funding of the programmes, the only source of funds was more and more development.” In short, Harbourfront became a festival marketplace that mimicked the growing privatization of public space, with portions of the original site “parceled out to the private sector in a series of real estate deals” (Greenberg 1996, 210). Harbourfront, then, served as yet another example of the confusion between public purpose and permitted practice and exposed the ongoing struggle to sort out development agendas. More problematic, however, was the fact that the management and protection of Harbourfront’s land and interests provided yet another layer of complexity to a jurisdictional entanglement that had become so complex that it was nearly impossible for the ordinary citizen to decipher just who exactly was responsible for the acrimonious acreage.

What was true for Harbourfront was evident elsewhere along the edge of Lake Ontario, as even minor decisions triggered public controversy over the pattern of development. Some public-private partnerships “evoked vociferous and critical reactions which focused on…the privatization of the water’s edge” and “the lack of public life at ground level” (Greenberg 1996, 200). Others, like Harbourfront, were deemed partially successful, suffering because they failed “to resolve conflicts between public and private interests and between agencies of levels of government, and the failure to prioritize objectives and create a plan with staying power” (Greenberg 1996, 211).
Harbourfront was important because it became a testing ground. Its development raised questions that concerned not only physical access to the water’s edge but social accessibility as well. As Cooper (1993, 163) notes, Harbourfront led people to question “how much access, of what kind, for whom, to what, for what purpose?” The development exposed the lack of homogeneity amongst Toronto’s baby boom generation and highlighted the difficulty of creating a unified waterfront vision in the presence of a balkanized public. Everywhere claims of ownership, accessibility and use of public waterfront space were challenged. It is worth repeating that the citizenry were united in principle by the desire for public waterfront space, but Harbourfront had revealed that they remained divided on questions of design and representation. The city’s waterfront was recognized to be symbolically significant space, but what it signified was fractured values and the limitations of the public sphere. The waterfront continued to be a terrain of struggle as much as it was a terrain of availability.

**Summation**

From moments of hiatus to elongated periods of intense scrutiny, the story of Toronto’s waterfront is one of competition and conflict, as well as rare instances of cooperation. This chapter has argued that historical claims to the waterfront matter because both the content of the claims as well as the identity of the claimants reveal the cultural politics and structural economic changes that took place in the city.

How has public opinion been defined and represented? Does the public still value the waterfront? These are questions that are not unique to Toronto; however, two things are obvious when examining the management of Toronto’s waterfront land: (1) the process of contention has been protracted; and (2) the constant rounds of renegotiation
have produced very little in the form of solutions or resolutions. In short, public waterfront land in Toronto is wedded to an intense political climate that has forced us to pause when attempting to answer the question: who constitutes the public?

In 1988, the federal government, citing the poor management and the absence of a coherent vision for Toronto’s waterfront, created a one-person Royal Commission to reevaluate the federal government’s role in the regulation of waterfront land in the city. David Crombie was appointed Commissioner. A little more than a decade and hundreds of recommendations later, a Crombie led Toronto Waterfront Regeneration Trust (the provincial spin-off agency that continued the work of the Royal Commission) was preparing itself for privatization. It was from the offices of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust that Crombie and other members of BIDCO began the work of preparing Toronto’s 2008 Olympic Bid. As we learned in the last chapter, Crombie saw the Olympics as one of the few vehicles capable of kick-starting waterfront regeneration. But in the absence of a generic waterfront vision, it was obvious that the task of defining an Olympic waterfront would require symbolic manipulation.

The coupling of Olympian sporting culture to urban redevelopment was destined to raise some basic questions: can you have a public waterfront built on the needs of the Olympic Games and maintain the site(s) as a resource for the people? Do other Olympic cities have a solid legacy of good civic spaces? Would Torontonians accept the Olympian vision? Having been equipped with this historical overview, it should now seem obvious why Toronto’s chief city planner, Paul Bedford, warned the bid team to exercise caution when making grandiose announcements and urged them to consider the difficulty of defining the public and its interest. Bedford understood that there are two issues to
consider regarding the public domain. First, it was apparent that the bid team would have
to address the constraints hindering physical access to the waterfront; second, the bid
team would have to delicately negotiate concerns regarding citizens’ access to the
decision-making process. The legacy of too many ill-fated waterfront plans, put together
without public involvement, had stripped the public’s confidence in the assuredness of
new ones. Bedford really did not have to remind Crombie of the magnitude of the
challenge that the bid team faced. Crombie, perhaps better than anyone else, was aware
of the spatial trials of Toronto’s waterfront. His work as Mayor and Commissioner of the
Royal Commission on the Future of Toronto’s Waterfront had provided him ample
opportunity to scrutinize the various stakeholders involved with city’s redevelopment
efforts. He had recommended the scaling back of the THC’s role and had orchestrated the
transfer of valuable lands from federal management to local control. But like so many
before him, he had struggled to create a unifying vision for the future. But also like many
others, he pinned his hopes on the symbolic power of the Olympics to chart a new course
for the waterfront.
Chapter 9. A local bid?

I ended Chapter Seven with Paul Bedford’s observation that the production of the Olympic symbol in Toronto would have to accommodate the cultural politics of local economic development. In Chapter Eight, I demonstrated that the struggle to produce a public waterfront has historically been fraught with tension. The politics of urban space on Toronto’s waterfront reflect a negotiation between large institutional interests and the voice of the local citizenry. In the previous chapter, I illustrated that the public has often been disenfranchised from the management of public space. Now I will show how the subject matter of previous chapters: space, sports, and symbols, became critical to the production of Toronto’s Olympic bid. The chapter takes a cue from Philip Ethington’s (1994, 38) point in *The Public City* that “[a]ny study of politics is largely justified by the understanding we gain from it about the performance of our political institutions.” How did the meaning of the Olympic Games and the values of Olympism become attached to the development of Toronto’s waterfront? Did the Olympic bid served as a conduit for a diversity of interests to re-imagine representations of space—particularly Toronto’s waterfront and the city’s local sportscapes? To address these questions we have to explore the framing of the Olympic symbol and the production of symbolic space.
In this chapter and the next, I focus on a few critical moments and examine several key relationships to help define the coupling of agency to vision (as outlined in Table 9.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 4, 1998</td>
<td>City Council endorses the request to approve, in principle, the City of Toronto 2008 Olympic Bid</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 17-18, 1998</td>
<td>City and BIDCO make presentation to the COA in Calgary at the COA Annual General Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 30, 1998</td>
<td>Meeting of the Strategic Policies and Planning Committee (SPPC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 9th, 1998</td>
<td>City Council endorses in principle the city’s bid for the Olympic Games (public consultation, formation of TO-Bid Board of Directors)</td>
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<tr>
<td>July, 1998</td>
<td>Morley Kells is appointed Ontario’s Olympics commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept.-Dec., 1998</td>
<td>Community discussions about Toronto’s 2008 Olympic Bid and consultations on draft Olympic principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November, 1998</td>
<td>Beijing enters into competition for the 2008 Olympics</td>
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<tr>
<td>December, 1998</td>
<td>COA supports Vancouver’s candidature for the 2010 winter Olympics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 25, 1999</td>
<td>John Bitove Jr. takes position of CEO of TO-Bid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer, 1999</td>
<td>‘Granite Club’ meetings held by John Bitove Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 1999</td>
<td>The Toronto Harbour Commission is replaced by the Toronto Port Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>July, 1999</td>
<td>The city releases a critical planning document entitled Unlocking Toronto’s Portlands: Directions for the Future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 3, 1999</td>
<td>Mayor Mel Lastman, Premier Mike Harris and Prime Minister Jean Chrétien announce the creation of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 9, 1999</td>
<td>TO-Bid releases new Olympic Master Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 29, 2000</td>
<td>Toronto City Council votes in favour of Olympic Master Plan authorizing Mayor Lastman to sign the Host City Agreement with the IOC</td>
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<tr>
<td>March, 2000</td>
<td>The Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force releases Our Toronto Waterfront: Gateway to the New Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar.-Aug., 2000</td>
<td>IOC analysis of applicant cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April, 2000</td>
<td>Morley Kells resigns from his post as Ontario’s Olympics Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept., 2000</td>
<td>IOC Executive Board selects candidate cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 15-Oct. 1, 2000</td>
<td>The Games of the XXVII are held in Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October, 2000</td>
<td>Mayor Lastman, Premier Harris and Prime Minister Jean Chrétien hold a press conference in the Port lands to announce $1.5 billion commitment to revitalizing Toronto’s waterfront.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 17, 2001</td>
<td>Submission of Candidature File to the IOC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan.-Feb., 2001</td>
<td>IOC analysis of candidature files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb.-April, 2001</td>
<td>Visits of the IOC Evaluation Commission to the Candidate Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May, 2001</td>
<td>Evaluation Commission Reports</td>
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</tbody>
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Building Bloc[k]s with BIDCO

We might recollect from Chapter Seven that the site decisions produced by BIDCO (i.e. an Olympic village in the Port Industrial Area) were reached without ever having been subject to an open discussion regarding alternative locales. We also learned that BIDCO had conducted a series of broad-based, but informal, discussions regarding the bid’s principles. It is, however, worth repeating that following two years of preliminary work, BIDCO still had to convince both City Council and the COA of the viability of an Olympic bid from Toronto. As John Sewell (2004) explains, until the bid hit the corridors of City Hall, Crombie had “been putting the bid together carefully and quietly, building support one person at a time.” This style of consensus building when applied to the Olympic bidding process, according to Sewell, can never truly be inclusive. Crombie and BIDCO were involved in the selling of an idea, he argues. Sewell further adds that when it comes to large scale projects like the Olympics, public consultation is transformed from a process of figuring out what the public wants and how it works, into a decision-making process that is driven by deadlines (Sewell 2004). The problem leading into the City Council’s decision regarding the bid, in Sewell’s opinion, was that BIDCO had failed to clearly articulate a statement of purpose. The bid team had managed to get the public thinking about the Olympics in general but on crucial issues the citizenry had been kept in the dark (Sewell 2004). Chiefly, Sewell argues, there was no public discussion “about what Toronto is to achieve in all this” (Sewell 2004). Articulating his thoughts in the alternative press, Sewell (Now, 19-25 February 1998, 25) argued that there were numerous people on the public payroll and otherwise that were wasting their
energy on the Olympics instead of using their talents to address more immediate problems that hindered Toronto’s vibrancy.

Nevertheless, BIDCO’s Olympic waterfront concept was lavishly promoted to Toronto’s three month old council on the 4th March, 1998. The list of alluring features and the opportunities for city building contained in the Report to Council\textsuperscript{51} clearly made some councilors giddy with excitement. The report, signed by Joe Halstead, Toronto's Commissioner of Economic Development, promoted the positive aspects of the Olympics drawing attention to the opportunities to create new waterfront housing and to develop new sporting venues and facilities. The report foresaw the redevelopment of former industrial spaces, the transformation of a portion of the railway lands and the revitalization and construction of sports stadiums and conference facilities on key waterfront parcels. It envisioned new transportation gateways and transit extensions to the downtown core and tempted councilors with more waterfront parkland. The potential for sport and cultural legacies was said to be abundant. Tourist dollars and numerous other economic spinoffs were promised. The Olympics, it seemed, could finally put to rest some of the development issues that plagued Toronto’s waterfront. It was an enticing offer to many councilors. For example, councilor Brad Duguid concluded:

\begin{quote}
the bid has the ability to galvanize us. The population is suffering from a lack of confidence, an Olympic Bid can remove us from that malaise and get us hopping again and get our residents feeling the spirit behind their city again. The volunteerism, the celebration, the pride that this would bring to our city, I think it is going to benefit us for generations upon generations. It is a golden opportunity for us Mr. Mayor and I hope that
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{51} See City of Toronto. 1998a.
we as a council will enthusiastically support it, it certainly has my support. We are going to have to go into it with our eyes wide open, we are going to have to scrutinize things as we go, but let’s make it happen. (Toronto City Council proceedings, March 4th 1998)

Where Halstead’s and BIDCO’s imagineering proved to be skimpy however, was in outlining the series of commitments and costs that would be required to make the project happen. Despite the lack of print material, the newly formed City Council still managed to mull over the implications and conditions of their support for several hours. By the end of the day, the decision to proceed with the bid was nearly unanimous with the official vote having been 54-1. Councilor Michael Walker represented the lone vote of dissent. And his motion to hold a public referendum on the subject was soundly defeated 2-50. As expected, the endorsement was layered with a number of criteria and amendments concerning financial guarantees, public safety, tenant protection, the importance of public consultation and participation, advertising, minority business protection and various other legal, environmental, economic and social issues. The necessity of written guarantees which stipulated the sharing of costs amongst other levels of governments and with corporations dominated much of the discussion. At the same time, Council’s approval seemed to be a certainty given that the city’s new mayor, Mel Lastman, had included the Olympic bid as part of his election platform and could entice councilors with coveted positions on council.

When reaching their decision, councilors were reminded by Crombie that they were only approving the bid in principle and that they would have ample opportunity to revisit every aspect of the bid at a later date. Crombie stressed that it was essential to
have Council’s support prior to the meeting of the COA in Calgary later in the year; otherwise the bid would fail. In essence, he was saying that the details they sought could only be provided following their endorsement. With their mayor telling them to vote positively, a senior city bureaucrat telling them that the Olympics was a winning proposition and with David Crombie asking for their trust, the bid had a trifecta of voices that the councilors—save for one—obviously felt they could live with.

In the aftermath of the Council’s endorsement, Toronto Star columnist Rosie DiManno, (The Toronto Star, 6 March 1998, B01) expressed concern over the form and function of BIDCO, claiming that it represented “all image and no substance. At least not publicly.” In the face of overwhelming support by the Council, DiManno questioned whether Torontonians knew enough specifics about the bid team and its goals to lend their own support. Like Sewell, DiManno acknowledged that Crombie and company had managed to involve several hundred people (working in committees) in the production of the draft “bid book”, but, she astutely claimed that “none of this explains the genesis of the bid, or who is actually behind it” (DiManno, The Toronto Star, 6 March 1998, B01). A waterfront concept, while attractive, falls well short of explaining “why” Toronto should bid, and does little to address the issue of “who” is doing Toronto’s bidding, she argued (DiManno, The Toronto Star, 6 March 1998, B01). Looking at the list of recommendations proposed by Council and in light of the concern expressed by Sewell, DiManno, and others, it was clear that difficult questions still needed to be addressed before BIDCO could properly claim that there was popular support for the bid. On the question of whether or not the proposed site plan could “facilitate the integration of the waterfront into the fabric of the City,” the debate had just begun.
Reflecting on the work of BIDCO and in principle the efforts of David Crombie, we find that the 2008 Olympic bid had gotten off to a slow but progressive start. City Council’s initial approval did mark an important victory. Despite the claims that BIDCO was not as publicly accessible as some critics demanded, we cannot discard the fact that with the Council’s endorsement, the helping hand of inertia had been implemented. The bid received a further boost when the United States Olympic Committee announced that they would not be submitting a candidate city for the 2008 competition. At the local level, the enthusiasm for the bid was growing, but BIDCO still had to convince the COA that a ‘Toronto Olympic Bid’ was worth pursuing internationally.

**The Vote of the Canadian Olympic Association: recasting the bid**

A team of thirty delegates, including David Crombie, Mayor Lastman, Premier Harris and Federal Transport Minister David Collenette made the trip to Calgary, Alberta in April of 1998 to promote Toronto’s 2008 Olympic bid to the delegates of the Canadian Olympic Association. It was an impressive show of solidarity on what had correctly been predicted to be a festive occasion. Since Toronto was the only city that was vying for the right to be Canada’s candidate city for the 2008 Olympics, receiving the nod from the COA was believed by many to simply be a matter of formality. The endorsement of fifty-eight of the COA’s sixty delegates confirms that Toronto’s candidature was viewed favourably. Yet, underneath the exterior of many of the jubilant faces of COA and BIDCO members was a growing tension on how the bid should be run and who should be responsible for carrying the bid to the international phase of the competition.
In the material BIDCO provided to the COA, the popularity of David Crombie and his “philosophy of inclusion” was used as a lynchpin to demonstrate that community support had been solicited and incorporated into the bid book. In particular it is noted that:

- a conscious effort has been made from the initial stages to seek the involvement and participation of community organizations and organizers. This includes local community agencies, Toronto Board of Trade, the United Way, major faith communities, Toronto Area Neighbourhood Centres, Parks and Recreation, the YMCA, Youth Services, and the Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres…To date, there has been immense interest in the inclusive nature of the Bid and the Bid’s commitment to building community (Toronto 2008: Bid Book for Presentation to the Canadian Olympic Association, 17 April 1998, 55).

The message being delivered was that a bid under Crombie’s direction could provide the type of participatory environment that the 1996 bid had failed to accommodate. At the same time, it is clear that building community support was an incremental process, and while early public opinion polls revealed that approximately 80% of the Greater Toronto Area residents supported the bid, this support was contingent on the adherence to the bid’s key principles and the opportunity to participate in the process (Toronto 2008: Bid Book for Presentation to the Canadian Olympic Association, 17 April 1998).

There was, however, one important matter of protocol that Crombie had left unresolved leading into the COA meeting. He had yet to sign a bid-city agreement with
the COA.52 In the year leading up to Toronto City’s Council endorsement, the COA had provided Crombie with a bid-city contract to sign. Upon the advice from a personal friend who was involved with the bid and who also happened to be a lawyer, Crombie chose not to sign the document (Crombie 2004a). He felt that the contract as initially drafted meant that “[w]e [Toronto] put up the dough and we do all the work” (Crombie 2004a). So Crombie held firm and tried to negotiate a better deal for BIDCO and for the city.

The twin features of the bid entering a new phase and the underlying tension produced by the unsigned bid-city agreement was masterfully captured by columnist Stephen Brunt. Brunt (1998, 47) depicts a compelling scene at the COA congress:

> [t]he tiny stage in a Calgary hotel meeting room is already dangerously overcrowded, with those experienced in the ways of the unblinking eye having staked out the places in front…The Premier of Ontario is dead-centre. The mayor of the new megacity of Toronto, Mel Lastman, tiny and curly-topped and ever-tanned, squeezes into the shot. The federal Minister of Transport, David Collenette, wears an ear-to-ear grin…Out of the shot, behind the politicos, are those who actually engineered the presentation before the Canadian Olympic Association (COA). And somewhere in there, no bigger than Mel, is the man – the only man, true believers would argue—who can deliver those Games, David Crombie.

Brunt (1998, 47) poses the crucial question of “whether Crombie will be left standing in 2008, and whether without him the Olympics can, indeed, be won.” For Torontonians, the

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52 Recall from Chapter Four that the IOC requires National Olympic Committees (i.e. the COA) to be protected from financial liabilities. The purpose of a bid-city agreement essentially outlines who holds power during the bidding process (i.e. the city, BIDCO, the COA, etc.).
bid and Crombie had slowly become synonymous. But, Brunt (1998, 47) reminded his readers that the Olympic bidding process has “three distinct phases” that includes first putting a bid group together [BIDCO], second, recasting that group and winning the international competition, and finally, the organizing and staging the Games. For Brunt, the meeting in Calgary had to be conceived as representing the bid’s entry into phase two—recasting. The leadership role that Crombie had exercised up until that point, Brunt (1998) claims, was now being seriously challenged by new individuals with significant ambitions and differing philosophies. Chief among these individuals reportedly was Carol Anne Letheren, CEO of the Canadian Olympic Association. Known not only for her “political clout, diplomacy, business, savvy, public eloquence” (Ormsby, *The Toronto Star*, 12 April 1998, C1) but also because she was a voting member of the IOC executive, Letheren was said to have been seeking to “run the Toronto bid” herself (Brunt 1998).

Recall, as well, that it was Carol Anne Letheren that Crombie had met with initially to help conceptualize a potential Toronto bid.

Brunt catalogues several details to help demonstrate that a continuation of a Crombie-led bid was under serious threat. For example, Brunt (1998) reveals that Letheren not only contacted Mel Lastman’s office but also phoned Federal Transport Minister David Collenette, to gauge their opinions on the matter of the bid proceeding without Crombie. The “Letheren coup” as John Lorinc (2001) defines it, ultimately failed to remove Crombie. Both Brunt (1998) and Lorinc (2001) credit the backing of Mel Lastman and his understanding that City Council’s support required Crombie’s presence on the bid for having deflected Letheren’s strategy. Lastman was prepared, though, to sign a renegotiated bid-city agreement that Crombie still felt could be improved (Crombie
2004a). Crucial to the new agreement was that “someone else be recruited to run the show” (Lorinc 2001, online). Also part of the proposed bid-city agreement was a greater role for the COA in terms of voting power during the appointment of the bid team’s board of directors, and more importantly, its executive committee.\textsuperscript{53} In short, for Toronto’s bid to go forward it would be required to incorporate a new bid group (eventually named TO-Bid), a new board of directors, as well as an executive committee to be selected with the COA’s input. While the changes were not nearly as significant as Letheren may have envisioned, Lorinc (2001, online) informs us that the timing of the COA’s ratification of the contract proved to be “ingenious”. Since the COA only holds its congress once a year, Lorinc (2001, online) points out that it had effectively “maneuvered [Toronto’s local politicians] in a take-it-or-leave-it position.”

Upon reflection, we could confidently conclude that Crombie had taught Letheren a lesson about conducting public business in Toronto. The favourable press he received regarding the legalities and wording of the bid city agreement strengthened his connection to the bid and aided his effort in securing the chair of the new bid committee. Meanwhile, Letheren was cast as a bully. Nevertheless, Letheren had successfully orchestrated the construction of a new bid team and had meaningfully illustrated that the next portion of the bidding process would be less locally defined. She had ensured that the COA would play a critical role in determining how the bid would be run. Letheren had guaranteed that the question: “[w]hat can the 2008 games do for the COA?”\textsuperscript{54} would figure more prominently in forthcoming discussions. In addition, the presence of Premier

\textsuperscript{53} See Bid City Agreement – XXIX Olympic Games in the Year 2008.
\textsuperscript{54} This question was first posed by Jane Armstrong (\textit{The Globe and Mail}, 17 April 1998, A6) in an article outlining some of the obstacles that BIDCO would face in their presentation to the COA. She writes, “the delegation (BIDCO) will dutifully describe what COA members want to hear, That is: What can the 2008 games do for the COA?”
Harris and David Collenette on the podium in Calgary indicated that Crombie’s notion of a “Toronto Olympic bid” might also be subject to recasting.

**Back to City Council**

It took some time for the hoopla associated with the host city bid agreement and the status of Crombie’s involvement to die down. The rumblings finally came to a halt when Crombie announced that he had accepted the chair of the board of directors of the new bid committee. As before, imposed deadlines helped to funnel attention towards new objectives. With his position secured, Crombie and his cadre of advisors and Toronto’s city staff returned to the business of generating support for the bid on the local front. They still required the approval of City Council on the matter of the bid-city agreement that Lastman had signed with the COA. In addition, they had to come up with a list of names for the bid board of directors as well as the twelve person executive committee. To put matters more bluntly, they had to prepare for a round of deputations before the Strategic Policies and Priorities Committee as well as another marathon session of Council.

The opportunity for the public to express their concern regarding the Olympic bid at the June 30th meeting of the Strategic Policies and Planning Committee (SPPC) did not produce a large turnout (City of Toronto. 1998b). Although lacking in the number of deputations (only seven), those present expressed pertinent and pointed opinions on the city’s bid. As was expected, Bread Not Circuses’s55 gadfly Michael Shapcott implored the

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55 Recall that Bread Not Circuses was the activist group that was considered a thorn to the Paul Henderson led 1996 Olympic bid.
committee to hold off on their recommendation until more public debate had occurred and a better understanding of the costs associated with the bid and Olympics were established. Another deputant, Helen Lenskyj, an Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) professor and Olympic scholar, shared her extensive academic expertise on the Olympic bidding process. She noted that the City of Toronto was engaging in a bid process that had been shown to be corrupt, arguing that “[d]uring Olympic bid processes and preparations for staging the Games, public involvement and debate, through both community consultation and a free press, are strictly controlled and, in many cases, actively suppressed by Olympic organizers” (Lenskyj 1998). She (Lenskyj 1998) warned councilors not to become seduced by an International Olympic Committee that “is completely disinterested in a democratic bid process.” A more thorough rendering of Lenskyj’s criticism of the bid process can be found in her book, Inside the Olympic Industry: Power, Politics and Activism (2000). Drawing attention to the lengthy delays experienced by individuals seeking to make deputations before the Strategic Priorities and Planning Committee, the inconsistency regarding City Councilors’ voting patterns on the various motions, and the perceived disinterest councilors exhibited for presentations by community representatives (i.e. councilors posed few questions), Lenskyj (2000) claims that the bid was operating as though public input did not matter.

In another written deputation, Stefan Kipfer, representing the Metro Network for Social Justice (MNSJ), expressed his organization’s discomfort with the power given to the COA through the bid-city agreement, an organization he accused of being
“unaccountable” and “secretive.”56 Kipfer further expressed concern about the scheduling of the public consultation process outlined by the city, pointing out that “by the time the public participation process can begin, many issues might already have been decided.” To combat what he referred to as an obvious “democratic deficit”, the MNSJ proposed that a new organizing committee for the games be “organized along the lines of a public agency, board, or commission with the regular obligations in areas of public information and public participation.” The MNSJ also suggested that the bid-city agreement ratification be deferred until the city’s public consultation process had been completed.

But it was the deputation led by Charles Smedmor, a forensic accountant, which generated the greatest attention. In his allotted five minutes, Smedmor voiced his concerns over the financial projections outlined in BIDCO’s bid book to the COA. Of concern to Smedmor was the apparent tidiness of the bid’s financial predictions. He argued that subtle changes to the financial situation (i.e. ticket sales, inflation, labour costs) could result in massive discrepancies between the proposed and actual costs. There was the real potential for a $1 billion deficit, he claimed. His point was that rough estimates were not sufficient and that an independent accounting firm be retained to examine the estimates. It is clear that Smedmor’s presentation was taken seriously, as The Toronto Star commented on his deputation and printed a copy of his analysis. His concern was that “city council will sign a contract with the Canadian Olympic Association before it understands the nature and extent of the commitment and the potential financial exposure for Toronto’s taxpayers” (Smedmor, The Toronto Star, 29 June 1998, 1). Smedmor’s message was that prudence, not pride, should be the modus

56 See the letter addressed to Mayor Lastman, Chair, Strategic Policies and Priorities Committee from Stefan Kipfer, 30 June 1998, on file in the office of the City Clerk. The document is cited as Kipfer (1998) under the Freedom of Information Request section in the bibliography.
operandi during Olympic bidding. It was a simple point, but as Lenskyj (2000) had demonstrated, sometimes the clamor of deadlines and seductiveness of the Olympic symbol triumph over due diligence. John Lorinc (2001, online) provided the documentary evidence when he reported that, “[t]he City of Toronto, responding to an access to information request, admits the municipal auditor never even reviewed the budget estimates—a stunning omission considering the substantial civic expense associated with mounting the Games.”

The above deputations reveal the deeply political nature of the Olympic bidding process. Lenskyj’s concern with the integrity of the IOC, Kipfer’s discomfort with an unchecked level of COA power, and Smedmor’s discrediting of the bid corporation’s financial numbers, sought to add what we might call a Habermasian voice of rationality into the bid process. Each of these individuals questioned a different aspect of Olympic decision making. Each asserted that the public have a right to information and a right to guide the process. They all used a public forum to raise questions of public importance. Nevertheless, each of their concerns was either flatly rejected or channeled into a procedural abyss. In the SPPC’s report for the Council (City of Toronto 1998b), it was noted that staff would “investigate the issues raised and report back as part of the regular reports to Council” regarding Lenskyj’s concerns, and that a meeting be arranged “to discuss Mr. Smedmor’s concerns and provide him with additional information.”

Tellingly, Mr. Smedmor’s request that an independent accounting firm look over the numbers was rejected 14-0. In response to Stephan Kipfer’s recommendations that ratification of the bid-city agreement be deferred and that the city create a public agency as opposed to a private not-for-profit corporation, the response was that “[s]taff continue
to recommend the structure for the bid to be set out as in the Bid City Agreement” and that “the City ratify the Bid City Agreement now” (City of Toronto 1998b). In short, the position of the SPPC was to push forward with the bid and they recommended that Toronto City Council (a) ratify the agreement, (b) launch a comprehensive public consultation process and (c) endorse a Board of Directors of the 2008 Olympic Bid Corporation (TO-Bid) (City of Toronto 1998c; City of Toronto 1998d).

Another Round of Council Debate

Despite knowing that there was almost no wiggle room regarding the bid-city agreement, City Councilors once again gamely pressed Halstead and Crombie about the specific wording of the contract on July 9th, 1998. Numerous recommendations were presented in an exhausting session of council that stretched late into the evening. Councilors mulled over the details of the bid-city agreement knowing full well though that they could not “amend the contract, only defeat it” (Lorinc 2001, online). After a day of mixed messages, political posturing and pointed questioning, another critical vote was taken. The result was familiar as council provided a 54-1 endorsement, mimicking the approval they had provided earlier in the year. Once again they comforted themselves with the knowledge that they would get another crack at the Olympic file prior to the final decision.

For the purpose of this dissertation it is not important to unpack all of the intricacies and decisions of the July 9th meeting of Toronto City Council.57 As mentioned, however, one crucial purpose of the July 9th meeting was to outline the broad consultation process

57 Helen Lenskyj’s Inside the Olympic Industry: Power, Politics and Activism (2000) dedicates several pages to the July 9th Council Meeting.
that would be implemented once the bid-city agreement was ratified. According to Joe Halstead, the city’s senior bureaucrat in charge of the Olympic bid, the purpose of the consultation process was to be threefold:

1. Provide the public with an opportunity to express their views on what they want the Olympics to do for the citizens of Toronto and our city;
2. Provide the public with access to and opportunities to participate in the Olympic planning;
3. Provide the citizens of Toronto with a public consultation process that receives input, incorporates new ideas, responds to concerns, educates the public, and builds support for the bid.

(City of Toronto 1998b)

This phased approach stemmed from a discussion paper prepared by Brian Jackson and Allen Appleby (both members of the city’s Olympic Steering Committee) a few months earlier. Jackson and Appleby (1998) noted that the creation of a set of Olympic Principles would aid in the construction of a draft bid book for the IOC. They recognized that the principles and the document would be stronger if they had broad public support, a sentiment that they clarified as meaning: “[t]he public must have a sense that they have had access to and participated in this public process.” In addition, Jackson and Appleby (1998) explained that “[t]he public consultation should be designed to receive input, incorporate new ideas, educate the public, build public support, undo negative media coverage, and publicize the bid.” From this single sentence it becomes obvious that the public consultation process would not simply be an exercise in opinion-gathering.
The first phase of the consultation process included focus group discussions narrowed around six areas of interest: social equity; environment; financial impact; transportation; venues; and cultural legacy. The framework proposed by Jackson and Appleby, and in turn communicated by Halstead to council, was said to have emerged from the public (re: the informal consultative work of BIDCO) and the thoughts expressed at earlier council meetings. In short, on the 9th July 1998, City Councilors were presented with an in-depth consultation and communication strategy. They were assured that the citizenry was going to be contacted via a brochure that was to be widely distributed to all community groups, special interest groups, as well as those individuals already on a mailing list. They had been informed that newspaper advertisements were going to be used to call attention to the various consultative efforts of the bid team, including community council meetings, focus group meetings and open houses. Basically, councilors had been assured that their constituents would have ample opportunity to participate in the process.

But a different question needs to be asked here: was the citizenry satisfied with the consultation plan? It is an important question when we consider a small caveat that Jackson and Appleby (1998) inserted into their discussion paper. They noted that “[t]hroughout the public participation process it will be necessary to state that Council will make the final decision as to the exact wording of the principles and the content of the Bid Book”. While a statement of this nature was not included in Halstead’s background report for Council on July 9th (and it may not have troubled many of the councilors), the matter did come up during the day. According to Helen Lenskyj (2000, 84):
One of the most antidemocratic votes at the July 9th meeting concerned the motion to incorporate the results of the upcoming community consultation, intended to generate “Olympic Principles,” into the final bid proposal. This was defeated 22-31, thus rendering the entire consultation process a meaningless and time-wasting exercise for all participants.

For Lenskyj (1998, 84), this decision marked the beginning of a shameful consultation process where citizen involvement was relegated to the “low rungs on the citizen participation ladder.”

Even a brief survey of the Olympic literature by councilors would have revealed that the Olympic bidding process has been characterized by a critical lack of public participation (Table 9.2, also see Chapter Seven).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation from literature</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Although these were the “Atlanta Olympics” the city government played a limited role … The lack of public funds also meant that public participation in planning for the Olympics was limited. Since most of the funds, sponsors, and development organizations were in the private sector, there was little impetus for a truly open, public process in preparing plans and projects.”</td>
<td>(French &amp; Disher 1997, 391)</td>
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<td>“The decision to bid however, is not necessarily democratic or based on a clear expression of public opinion … in many instances the bid preparation is ‘fast-tracked’ with only limited public consultation and an incomplete evaluation of the social and economic implications.”</td>
<td>(Essex &amp; Chalkley 1998, 191)</td>
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<td>“However, because of the complex and often short-sighted and secretive political processes involved, there is no general public discourse equivalent to the republic debate about what kind of city Sydney should be … The processes involved in Olympic decision making are decentralized and anarchic.”</td>
<td>(Wilson 1996, 604)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The nature of Olympic planning is that planning begins elsewhere rather than in the community … The nature of the public input that resulted was rather limited at that point, and of course was constrained by the competitive nature of the bid process which effectively muzzled dissent in the face of the unity required for the bid to be effective … winning the bid took precedence over community consultation.”</td>
<td>(Hiller 2000, 450)</td>
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<td>“Ironically, the only form of public participation in the bidding process were opinion polls.”</td>
<td>(Waitt 1999, 1057)</td>
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It would have been even less work for the councilors to reflect on the failings of the city’s 1996 Olympic bid and the problems of the public consultation process during that attempt (see Chapter Seven). The public had once again been invited to a discussion regarding the Olympics, but they had been denied—at least from a local procedural perspective—the ability to control the agenda. In addition, they had no assurances that their concerns would be addressed in the final bid book. Given this situation, it is easy to see why Lenskyj (2000) was enraged. She was correct when she determined that the public had been robbed of much of its agency. The councilors had created a situation where, as Habermas would have it, “[p]ublicity loses its critical function in favor of a staged display” (Habermas 1989, 206).

Another key decision arrived at on July 9th was the formation of the inaugural Board of Directors to the 2008 Olympic Bid Corporation. Of significance is the word corporation in the above sentence. It is imperative to keep in mind that TO-Bid was “a separate and distinct legal entity from the City of Toronto” and the City “[had] no direct authority or jurisdiction over the operations of the organization.” TO-Bid was thus a private entity.

With a vote of 49-3 city councilors affirmed a board of directors loaded with many of the city’s prominent power brokers. Some of the names on the list were clearly chosen because of their links to sport development in the city: John Bitove Jr., Allan Slaight, Paul Godfrey, and Trevor Eyton. Others reflected the Canadian Olympic Association’s stake in the bid: Carol Anne Letheren, Michael Chambers, Renn Crichlow, Sandra Levy, Richard Pound, Walter Sieber, Bill Warren, James Worrall, Doug

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58 Recall that the terms and conditions of the bid-city agreement required the formation of a new operating body
Hamilton. Others: Bruce Kidd, Steven Hudson, Anne Golden, John Cartwright, William Duron, James Ginou, and Rocco Rossi were included because of their expertise and affiliations. The board also included a select number of honourary patrons including three former provincial premiers: William Davis, David Peterson, Bob Rae and a couple of lieutenant-governors: Lincoln Alexander and Henry Jackman. The press celebrated the diversity of the board of directors which consisted of forty-three men and nineteen women. Of merit was the fact that nineteen non-Caucausian members sat on the board.

City Councilors demanded, however, that additional names be added to the list to reflect Toronto’s broader diversity. By the end of the summer there were more than one hundred names on the Board. While the large presence of women and visible minorities helped to distinguish the 2008 Board of Directors from the previous bid (which had only two females (James, *The Toronto Star*, 10 July 1998, F1)), the sheer size of the Board of Directors led some to call the group a cheering section. It would be the work of the individual committees and in particular the executive committee that would determine the fate of the bid (Lorinc 2001). With “overwhelming political support” and a mass of distinguished board members, one columnist claimed that the bid had “moved into full throttle” (Infantry, *The Toronto Star*, 10 July 1998, F1).

With the partnership between the City and the COA confirmed, the bid could indeed move forward. Here we can recall the insightful comment that the editor of *The Toronto Star* had made early in the bid process, the idea that the bidders “must court public opinion before wooing the IOC” (*The Toronto Star*, 31 July 1996, A16). In the aftermath of the July 9th meeting of City Council, we find that our two critical findings—a proposed framework for a public consultation process and the selection of a new
bidding group—did not mesh very well. We do know that David Crombie had managed
to survive during the transition. We also know that Toronto’s City Council had agreed to
a bid-city arrangement that required a new CEO and COA, positions that “Mr. Toronto”
had been prevented from occupying.

How would the reformulated bid team be received? I use the next section to
demonstrate that when BIDOC was replaced by TO-Bid, a different sort of relationship
between the city and the bid team was ushered in. With a heightened corporate presence,
the fingerprints Crombie had put on the bid were soon smudged. As two years of BIDCO
work came to a close, and with three years remaining for TO-Bid to influence the IOC’s
decision, we find that bid continued to be propelled by timelines. Of course, the more
critical question that remained unresolved was: whose bid was being moved along?

A transformed bid

A number of clues indicate that a broad transition took place during the summer
months of 1998. First, was the appointment of Morley Kells, Member of Provincial
Parliament, to the position of Olympics Commissioner. The entrance of Kells can be read
in a couple of ways. Not only did it confirm the province’s commitment to the 2008
Olympic bid, but it illustrated that the bid was not simply going to be a locally governed
affair. In many ways, Kells was an ideal choice to secure provincial involvement having
served as the president of the Toronto based Urban Development Institute, a position that
gave him intimate knowledge of municipal politics. He therefore had a degree of
familiarity with the intricacies of Toronto’s land-use planning conflicts, especially those
that pertained to the waterfront. Moreover, Kells had an extensive background in sport
both as an athlete and in the realm of media and promotion. At the same time, Kells had
gained a reputation for being a bit of a trouble-maker and he readily admitted, “Mike Harris and I never got along all that well” (Kells 2004).

Kells’s appointment can also be read as indicative of the lack of fiscal autonomy that Canadian municipalities struggle with. Much of the bickering by Toronto’s City Council during the bid’s first two years revolved around the necessity of ensuring that senior levels of government would provide financial guarantees for the bid. City councilors were rightly concerned with the potential for cost overruns. From this perspective, the appointment of a provincial Olympics Commissioner was a necessity given that the scale of the Olympics would require numerous policy decisions on issues that the City of Toronto lacked the authority to resolve. Upon his appointment, Kells stated that his job was to ensure that the City of Toronto did not use the Olympics as a means to acquire costly capital projects that were only marginally related to the bid (Kells 2004). From the beginning he made his position known, he would seek to protect the provincial interest and provincial taxpayers.

A more obvious example of the brewing conflict between the bid’s local flavour and the growing provincial interest became evident during the lead-up to the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur. The opportunity to develop contacts and subtly pitch a bid is one of the key functions of attending major international sporting functions during the lead-up to decision day. In the fall of 1998, Ashante Infantry from The Toronto Star reported that two separate and uncoordinated groups would be making the trip to Malaysia to market Toronto’s 2008 Olympic Bid. It was reported that Premier Harris, along with a small team of supporters, would be making the trip to establish relationships with critical members of the IOC. In turn, Crombie’s team, which included
Evenson and Halstead, would be seeking to accomplish the same purpose. Two teams, two jets, one privately leased by TO-Bid’s new executive committee chair, Steve Hudson, and filled with provincial representatives, the other a commercial flight filled with Crombie and his aides, but both with the same task, to sell one bid. The situation sparked the fury of Richard Pound at the inaugural meeting of To-Bid’s Board of Directors. As a prominent member of the IOC, Pound understood the consequences of infighting. Pound called for “seamless” unity (Pound quoted in Infantry, The Toronto Star 2 September 1998, B3) and a "single and transparent agenda" in an outburst that was likened to “frustrated parent delivering a verbal spanking to his kids” (Starkman, The Toronto Star, 3 September C8). That Pound felt it necessary to use the first meeting of TO-Bid’s Board of Directors to voice his displeasure speaks to the degree of friction that existed between the groups represented by the province and Crombie. In the end, the two teams traveled together but the animosity remained.

With the layers of contention multiplying, the city’s public consultation process finally began (Figure 9.1).
The public meetings were intended to provide a forum for people to share their ideas and opinions about Toronto’s bid (Halstead 2004). In reality, one of the principal functions of these meetings was to allow TO-Bid to provide information about the bid’s status. In a scathing article entitled: “Stay silent about Olympic bid? No way,” Michelle Landsberg (*The Toronto Star* 13 September 1998, A2) voiced displeasure over the management of the bid. She noted that it did not bother her if Crombie and Harris tried to schmooze IOC delegates across the world. What irked her more was “the insistence by everyone with a stake in the secretive bid process that we local peons give our total, unanimous unquestioning support.” She asked:
[w]hat are we supposed to be, the Stepford Citizens, zombie-ing with fixed stare and robotic step in total mass obedience toward the goal of the Olympic gods’ blessing? The sports moguls who engineered Toronto’s $40 million Olympic bid demanded one thing of us—ask no questions!—and a childishly over-excited Toronto City Council complied. The proposal was rushed forward with zero public debate.

She argued that it was “crazy to get behind it [the bid] until we know much, much more about costs and benefits.” At its root level the article was demanding that the bid team explain the collective benefit of hosting the Olympics. In a sense she was echoing the sentiment that John Sewell expressed earlier in the year regarding what Toronto stood to gain from seeking the Olympic Games. In Landsberg’s estimation the value of Olympics had soured, having fermented because of corporate greed.

Why, why, have they [sport czars] always had it their way? Because TV sports—forget religion—are the opiate of the masses. It’s the ultimate capitalist dream… The sports czars still need those “amateur” world athletic events, however, lest that global audience become cynical or even disenchanted with millionaire players of less than admirable character. What better than the Olympics to give the network owners and advertisers a chance to slobber on about youthful idealism, ardent effort, noble aspiration and patriotic pride? And because some of those qualities really do exist for many of the competitors and their audience, we let the hypocrites get away with their smarm. This time, we ought to counter the politicians’ agenda for us … with a list of our own proposals.”
Her questioning of the Olympic symbol helped people refocus their opinions on ideas and ideals, and not simply on individuals.

In another critical piece appearing in Toronto’s alternative press, Patrick Chan (Now 24-30 September 1998) asked “[w]hat do Olympic bigwigs have to hide?” Chan drew attention to the fact that neither TO-Bid’s executive committee nor its subcommittee meetings were open to the public. The closeted nature of TO-Bid meant that important decisions and information were being sheltered from public debate. Request for greater access were frequently block by TO-Bid, and the public was reminded that TO-Bid was a private agency that was not legally obligated to open their meetings.

The deputations appearing at the various community council meetings demonstrated that the Olympics could produce discussion on a diverse range of topics (i.e. transportation, accessibility, costs, venue site location, homelessness, social equity). A review of the handwritten notes from the community council meetings (obtained through a FOI request) reveal that some citizens and councilors (particularly those from East York) requested that a referendum be held. Some deputations criticized the bid group as not being transparent enough. One resident from the Parkdale community expressed concern about the physical impacts on local neighbourhoods. Some councilors asked that facilities be distributed in their particular communities, demonstrating the regionalism associated with pre-amalgamation lingered. While some councilors demanded facilities, citizens critiqued those facilities that had tentatively been slotted. For example, the wisdom of locating the athletes’ village in the portlands was questioned. Several people stressed the necessity of social equity. There were also those who
expressed concern about the consultation process itself, arguing that the very meeting they were participating was simply a cosmetic public relations exercise. This was the view held by John Sewell, who continued to complain that very idea of public consultation during the bidding process was deficient because the consultations continued to revolve around explaining an idea, not refining it. He argued that the bid team was “there to sell a product, not to try and find out what the public wants” (Sewell 2004).

With each shift in venue during the public consultation process, different voices were added to the mix. If we concentrate on the specific motions and citizen requests and complaints that emerged from these meetings, we have the basis of John Dewey’s point about the creation of “too many publics.” On the other hand, if we step away from the individualized nature of the claims, then we have the makings of a public. The power of the Olympics is not only in encouraging people to think, but in persuading them to talk. There is virtually no evidence to support the idea that most people rejected the Olympic bid outright. Instead, the malleability of the Olympic symbol allowed people to consider how the Olympic Games might improve the city and accomplish more narrowly-defined goals such as public infrastructure renewal, education, economic development, youth and/or community development, the creation of a more healthy population and so on. During the consultation process, Toronto’s bid team was faced with having to address city building goals as influenced by land, labour and capital, as well as the humanitarian goals that were the result of the citizenry’s lingering belief in Muscular Christianity.

When private citizens entered into the debate about the meaning of the Olympic symbol, they did so as concerned individuals. Their presence at the community council meetings, as Hannah Arendt would emphasize, helped to establish a shared interest. They
sought to question and define what an Olympic city was and what the Olympics should mean. They sought both information and answers. It is true that Crombie and others had conveyed that the Olympics must be inclusive, socially responsible, environmentally progressive, financially sound and that they must leave a legacy. It is equally correct to note that many of those in attendance applauded these goals. At the same time, however, those in attendance became more than a passive-audience by demanding more than a well-crafted list of objectives. How would inclusivity be ensured or defined? What would constitute a legacy? How could social responsibility be judged? An eclectic group of private citizens, in their multiplicity and diversity, demonstrated to the bid team that it would have to satisfy a number of the unresolved questions if they wanted to properly claim public support.

During the meetings, the bid team struggled to provide concrete answers while often lacking specifics on key decisions such as the site plan. Following these meetings, the bid team could rightfully claim that this was the very purpose of the public consultation process—to solicit opinions. But, TO-Bid could not claim that they or the bid represented public opinion. In summation, we find that the Olympic symbol was acting as a common reference point that stimulated dialogue, but it had yet to be a galvanizing force.

We can safely conclude that at the conclusion of the community council meetings, participants had not been offered what Landsberg (The Toronto Star 13 September 1998, A2) demanded as crucial information: “much, much more about costs and benefits.” The same could be said for the public open houses held a few months later. During these events, seventy-five draft Olympic principles were presented and declared to have been
developed during the series of focus group discussion that followed the community council meetings. Consider for example, principle VII which stressed that the Olympics shall “be debt free and publicly accountable through open processes that inspire confidence and build trust” (City of Toronto 1998e). This was a reasonable principle to strive for, yet the City had neither worked out an agreement with the province for cost guarantees, nor had it released its budgets. More problematic was the fact that TO-Bid had not opened all of its meetings to the public. In essence, concerned citizens who demanded details would have to resign themselves to another period of patience, a process that certainly did not inspire confidence. By now it had become clear that the concerns expressed by Sewell, Lenskyj and Landsberg regarding the quality and significance of public participation during the bidding process remained unaddressed.

**Cracks of confidence and a loss of credibility**

While the tensions illustrated above were worrying signs, two decisions in the fall of 1998 provided deeper sources of concern for TO-Bid. First was China’s decision to enter the competition for the 29th Olympiad. Given that the IOC had been working diligently to reach new audiences (and markets), China’s entrance into the bid process presented Toronto’s bid team with a formidable foe. From the outset it was rumoured that China’s bid was favoured by the IOC’s president, Juan Antonio Samarach. Having been narrowly defeated by Sydney for the 2000 Olympics, Beijing was the instant favourite to win the Games which Toronto coveted.

The second source of consternation for the bid team was the COA’s decision to back a Vancouver-based bid for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. The decision to support two simultaneous bids to an international organization that had historically
favoured shifting continents with each successive Games was a perplexing decision to Toronto’s bid backers. It launched a period of second guessing as many individuals wondered whether the COA was questioning Toronto’s ability to win. How exactly would two national bids be perceived by the IOC? How would corporate and government funds be allocated under this dual bid set up? In an earlier chapter I outlined a nationalist impulse for supporting international sporting events. Olympic bids are costly affairs and to have two bids competing for the same national resources and the attention of the same international organization seemed to be faulty logic. The financial strain was clearly obvious in Toronto’s pursuit of the Games. In the months following the selection of the TO-Bid Board of Directors, the bid team had struggled to raise funds. Morley Kells had organized the provision of a provincial loan to the bid team, but the prospect of having two potential bids seeking to draw from similar pools of resources was not ideal. At least this was the opinion of Richard Pound and David Crombie, both of whom commented that there was enough uncertainty in promoting one bid. Put bluntly, the COA’s decision to support a Vancouver-based bid did not aid Toronto’s chances.

The COA’s decision serves as a useful reiteration of several of the points made in Chapter Five. The COA is independent from the national government and it is driven by an Olympic Charter and empowered by the International Olympic Committee. The COA exists in principle to further the Olympic movement in Canada. From this perspective, the pursuit of two simultaneous bids neatly aligns with the COA’s mandate even if it challenges the confidence of the bid teams. Put bluntly, the COA’s objectives, were not the same as TO-Bid’s. Responding to Stephen Brunt’s claim that Crombie was being jostled by the sport organization following their annual congress earlier in the year (see
above), the COA’s President William (Bill) Warren took it upon himself to clarify the COA’s stance on the issue. In an article printed in the *The Globe and Mail* (25 September 1998, 10), Warrant criticizes Brunt’s analysis arguing that

> It is unfair to suggest there is, or can be, a struggle among bid participants over the nature and direction of the bid process. The mandate, role and responsibilities of the city, the COA and the bid group are clearly outlined in the Olympic Charter and in the agreement between the City of Toronto and the COA.

Warren also took the time to remind the readers of the *The Globe and Mail* about the Olympic bidding process in general:

> It is inaccurate to suggest that any one individual can elect to pursue an Olympic Games ‘on his own’. Under the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) rules, no such effort can be initiated outside that country’s National Olympic Association. The Olympic Charter and the COA’s own decision-making structure ensure that this simply cannot happen.

Having inserted the COA’s authority, Warren then seeks to resolve the lingering rumours that Crombie was a thorn in the bid process, commenting “[i]t is untrue to suggest that our CEO or the COA are in "conflict" with David Crombie regarding his continued involvement in Toronto's bid. No one is more aware of his past and potential contribution to this process than the COA.” Finally, Warren concludes the matter—and settles one key unanswered question—by stating: “[t]hat is why *we contacted him* two years ago to enlist his participation at the outset of the Toronto bid process” (italics added). From the above
examples, we find that the Canadian Olympic Association, like the City of Toronto and the Province, had an agenda both to pursue and promote.

While the bid team and the COA struggled to clarify their intentions and solicit broad public support, Morley Kells had worked without fanfare to secure all-party provincial support for a private member’s bill—Bill 77—that he had crafted. Kells used the Bill as a communicative device. While he recognized that the support of the Ontario Legislature would please the IOC, he also sought to ensure the Office of the Ontario Olympics Commissioner would be involved in defining the assurances and agreements made to the IOC by TO-Bid. The bill was a way to indicate formally that provincial support was conditional (Kells 2004). Once again, Kells had used his position simultaneously to express support for the bid while hinting that unless TO-Bid was willing to compromise, a struggle might unfold.

If (a) the internal conflicts within the TO-Bid, (b) the growing friction between the local and provincial supporters of the bid, (c) the COA’s decision to support two simultaneous bids, (d) China’s declared intention to pursue the 2008 Olympic Games, and (e) the bid team’s inability or unwillingness to answer basic questions regarding costs and benefits posed by citizens at public meetings were not enough to dismay some of the most loyal supporters of the bid, then the Salt Lake City bribery scandal that became public at the end of 1998 put an exclamation point on a difficult year. With the allegations of corruption and bribery tainting the image of the IOC, local feelings towards Toronto’s bid shifted into the realm of uncertainty. City councilors who had so jubilantly supported the bid twice in the previous year began to voice their unease. For example,

59 See Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Bill 77, An Act to endorse the proposed bid of the City of Toronto to host the XXIX Summer Olympic Games. December 17, 1998.
councilor Brian Ashton could not help but note the “low profile of the bid promoters” and he questioned “where the Olympic guys have gone.” In the absence of a visibly-active bid team he claimed, “[w]e’ve lost the zip with our own public” (Aston quoted in DeMara, *The Toronto Star*, 24 January 1998, E6). Survey results during the period indicated that many councilors and citizens had reeled in their support (DeMara, *The Toronto Star*, 26 January, A1; *The Toronto Star*, 27 January 1999, A23). In addition, numerous newspaper reports drew attention to the fact the bid had “stalled” (Vincent, *The Toronto Star*, 25 April 1999, A22), “faded into obscurity” (James, *The Toronto Star*, 12 March 1999, B1) or was “barely breathing” (Perkins, *The Toronto Star*, 30 April 1999, C9). During these trying times, members of the COA, including Carol Anne Letheren and William Warren, accused the bid of “lacking direction” and losing “credibility” with the IOC (Vincent, *The Toronto Star*, 25 April 1999, A22). David Crombie readily admitted that there was a “climate of cynicism” surrounding the whole process (Crombie 2004a).

It was not until March of 1999 that TO-Bid finally secured a CEO. The decision to appoint John Bitove Jr. generated mixed reviews. For example, Bread Not Circuses expressed severe reservations about Bitove, noting that his family had a “stormy history in public-private business partnerships” in the city (Christie, *The Toronto Star*, 27 January 1999, S5). The hiring of Bitove would signal, according to Bread Not Circuses leader Michael Shapcott, a corporatist takeover: “[i]t’s not a Crombie bid anymore, it’s an old-boys’ bid from the 1996 Games…The bid represents the city of Toronto, but, de facto, it’s run by a tight little clique” (Shapcott quoted in Christie, *The Toronto Star*, 27 January 1999, S5). Although Bitove had helped bring the world indoor track and field and world basketball championships to Toronto in the early 1990s, these
accomplishments had faded from civic memory and had been replaced with less favourable impressions stemming from his involvement with the city’s professional sports teams and facilities (including the Skydome, the Air Canada Center and the Toronto Raptors). While Bitove did not enjoy the same support that Crombie had at the local level, his international connections in the world of finance and sport would be a significant advantage when pitching the bid to the IOC.
When John Bitove Jr. assumed the role of CEO of TO-Bid he faced a monumental task. Not only was he charged with the task of reigniting Toronto’s bid, he would have to convince an increasingly skeptical local public that the Olympic Games were still worth pursuing. He would also have to strike a balance between domestic desires and international expectations. When asked to reflect upon the status of the bid when he first took the title of CEO, Bitove commented, “[i]t was a brilliant local bid and what I think Mr. Crombie and his team had a lot of expertise in was dealing with community issues…what they hadn’t had much experience is, and at no fault, they just didn’t have much experience, was dealing with the international sporting community” (Bitove 2004). Bitove understood that while local demands could not be ignored, the bid had to address the concerns of the various sporting federations as well as those of the IOC. Upon his appointment as CEO, Bitove quickly outlined a six-part action plan to determine the bid’s viability. He sought to: (1) review the IOC’s reforms; (2) reconfigure cost estimates for
the Games; (3) determine how much the bid itself was going to cost given the cutbacks outlined by the IOC; (4) improve communication with the COA and with Vancouver’s bid; (5) garner a more positive dialogue amongst the three level of governments; and (6) construct a new master plan (Perkins, *The Toronto Star*, 30 April 1999, C09). In essence, the bid had a fresh face and sought a fresh start.

I have indicated that Crombie (through BIDCO) and the COA had always favoured a waterfront site for the Olympics. I have further argued that the opportunity to finally get something done on the waterfront had sparked the imaginations of many of Toronto’s councilors. John Bitove shared Crombie’s view that a waterfront location would be central to a successful bid. He noted that the “[19]96 was a very good bid, but the focus on the waterfront [for the 2008 bid] was due to David Crombie…I think he made it a real waterfront bid and that was very alluring” (Bitove 2004). Bitove explained that upon taking a leadership role with the bid he had three main goals: (1) “to win the competition”; (2) to secure “tri-government level support to clean up the waterfront”; and (3) to “increase the funding for amateur athletes” (Bitove 2004). The continued commitment to a waterfront games provided the occasion for a symbolic merging. But considering the malleability of the Olympic symbol and the historic spatial struggle that characterizes Toronto’s waterfront, it should not be surprising to learn that the challenge of re-imagining the shoreline through an Olympic view-finder proved contentious.

From the release of the very first draft physical outline of venue and facility locations it was clear that an Olympian waterfront was not a shared vision. For example, the Toronto Harbour Commission had rejected BIDCO’s preliminary designs which had situated the athletes village in the Port Industrial Area. Following the bid’s public
consultation work, the THC’s chair, Harold Peerenboom, rearticulated the THC’s objection exercising a special bylaw to prevent development in the portlands.\(^{60}\) At the time, Peerenboom emphasized that the portlands were an industrial not a residential area. The THC reaffirmed its stance in April of 1999, noting that much of the land located at Polson and Cousins Quay was privately owned and that business activity in the port had escalated (DeMara, *The Toronto Star*, 5 April 1999, B4). In turn, members of TO-Bid emphasized the success of Barcelona’s (1992) and Sydney’s (2000) Olympics and their ability to revitalize brownfield areas. They argued that an environmental clean-up and the beginning of residential development in the port area would be viewed as significant “legacies” by the IOC and would make Toronto’s bid more competitive (Crombie 2004; Evenson 2004). As the funding of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust (which brought Crombie’s attention to the Olympics in the first place) wound down, Crombie maintained that the “east side of the waterfront is where we have been begging for a future for so long, but it has been tied up in jurisdictional knots and no one’s been able to crack through. This is a real opportunity to force the issue” (Crombie quoted in McAndrew, *The Toronto Star*, 26 March 1999, A3). The use of the word force is telling here, because it was tied to the symbolic power of the Olympics. The bid had begun to expand beyond local considerations and to emphasize competitive advantage. Crombie acknowledged that “[w]e [the THC and TO-Bid] have a difference of opinion,” but maintained that the issue would “be resolved by the city” in the “time-honoured Toronto way, through public debate” (Crombie quoted in DeMara, *The Toronto Star*, 5 April 1999, B4). While

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\(^{60}\) Bylaw 23 was a special federal order-in-council that permitted the THC to veto development in the port area. It was the first time that the agency had used the power and the decision was not subject to appeal.
Crombie may have believed that the public would support the Olympic development plan (Crombie 2004a), it should be noted that those involved with the bid were partly driven by the knowledge that the THC was going to be disassembled and replaced by a Federal Port Authority (now the Toronto Port Authority). Regardless, the rationale to use the portlands for the Olympics was questioned by the provincial government’s Olympic commissioner, Morley Kells. Kells was particularly concerned with the cost of cleaning up the portlands and he argued that without zoning changes and cost details “there is no waterfront concept” (Kells quoted in Christie, The Toronto Star, 25 March 1999, S2). Despite the uncertainty, members of TO-Bid’s subcommittees proceeded “on the principle that the Olympic village [would] be located at the disputed site” (DeMara, The Toronto Star, 5 April 1999, B4). The public was once again forced to wait having been marginalized during the process of corporate reconfiguration.

Crombie’s trusted aid, Jeff Evenson,\(^{61}\) emphasizes that the principles underlying the bid established by BIDCO (i.e. green, open, accessible, affordable and inclusive) told “the story of why we should have the Olympics in Toronto” (Evenson 2004). Although Evenson acknowledges that he is “a Crombie guy,” he maintains that the above principles were “Crombie’s genius” (Evenson 2004). In Evenson’s opinion, BIDCO had managed to generate public support and had established a foundation for the bid to go corporate. He claimed that those involved with BIDCO “knew eventually that the bid would go corporate, we knew it and we were working to get the bid into the shape where it would appeal to and be adopted by the corporate sector, because the corporate sector had the money that is necessary to do the real job. But you got to get it there first” (Evenson

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\(^{61}\) Recall that Jeff Evenson had worked with David Crombie at the Waterfront Regeneration Trust and was a key member of BIDCO. Evenson became TO-Bid’s Special Advisor, Social Equity and Local Support.
Yet, following Bitove’s appointment, Evenson notes that there was a shift in the decision-making structure of the bid which marginalized many of the bid team’s early members, including himself. He claims, “after Bitove came, I would say that my role was severely diminished although I did continue the run the public side of the bid, and to be the spokesperson in many cases for the bid locally, but the strategic stuff at that point fell more to Bitove and the team that he brought in” (Evenson 2004). When asked whether or not there was a loss of credibility when the bid shifted to TO-Bid, Evenson highlighted a reduction in transparency. He claimed “those of us worked on the public side of things … you can’t be too open, too transparent, you can’t have too many people inside the tent.” It was a view, Evenson claims, that was “directly opposite to the private sector point of view.” TO-Bid tended to “withhold information” Evenson said, and often would only “deal one on one.” Evenson explained that for many crucial issues (physical infrastructure, housing, community relations) there was often “no lateral passing of information” (Evenson 2004). At the very least, Evenson expressed that he was not privy to many of the critical discussions.

**A Port of Contention: The Olympics shift eastward**

John Lorinc (2001) has brilliantly described the sequencing of events that coupled a redesigned Olympic Master Plan with a broader waterfront redevelopment initiative following Bitove’s appointment as TO-Bid’s CEO. According to Lorinc (2001, online), John Bitove thought the CNE grounds would be unable to accommodate the increased traffic that the Olympic Games would create and consequently a new plan was sought. If we jump forward to the release of TO-Bid’s Master Plan in the fall of 1999, we find that the physical plan for the staging of the Games had been considerably altered. Instead of a
CNE-centered proposal, the physical plan now depicted three rings of activity along Toronto’s waterfront. There was a ring around the CNE grounds and Ontario place, a ring around the central waterfront near the Skydome and the Air Canada Center, and an Eastern ring in the port lands. Of importance was the inclusion of Olympic Ring East. The port lands were scheduled to be the site of a number of important Olympic-related facilities. Readers of *The Globe and Mail* were treated to the following image:

**Figure 10.1. Toronto's Olympic Masterplan** (source: *The Globe and Mail*, 10 November 1999, S2)

This was an ambitious concept map given that “unlike the city owned CNE, all three levels of government, Ontario Hydro and various companies owned bits and pieces of the port lands” (Lorinc 2001, online). Lorinc (2001, online) reveals that the new layout emerged from a series of “top secret marathon sessions convened by Bitove in the summer of 1999”, a set of discussions Lorinc called the “the Granite Club meetings.” Specifically, Lorinc (2001, online) explained:
History should record that the fate of Toronto’s desolate port lands was sealed at these late-afternoon gatherings, which began with arguments over the best location for the Olympic village but soon turned into a wide-ranging forum about the gritty mechanics of city building. About 15 key strategists attended, including Karen Pitre, former Olympic rower Doug Hamilton, MMM\(^{62}\) executive vice-president Bill Longden and PCL\(^{63}\) senior vice-president Brad Nelson, as well as a handful of architects and political advisors. History should also record that David Crombie, though still the TO-Bid chair, was not present.

The presence of Longden and Nelson at the meetings can be linked to TO-Bid’s desire to secure cost guarantees. In the spring, Bitove had issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) regarding the construction and management of facilities for the Games and their related infrastructure requirements. It was a clever move designed to instill public confidence that Toronto’s new Olympic facilities would not produce the same civic friction which became associated with the city’s other sporting facilities (such as Skydome) and which had tainted the legacies of other Olympic cities. It was also a signal to City Council that the private sector could provide some of the financial backing that was desperately required. Dave Perkins (\textit{The Toronto Star}, 18 May 1999, E11) helped fill in the gaps by explaining that the “provincial government was in an election year” and therefore was unlikely “to stand up and volunteer to absorb potentially billions of dollars in cost overruns.” The wording of the RFP was intentionally demanding, with Bitove noting that perhaps “about 10 companies could legitimately bid on the Olympics” (Bitove quoted in

\(^{62}\) MMM stands for Marshall Macklin Monaghan, a Markham Ontario based engineering firm.

\(^{63}\) PCL is a group of independent construction companies
Van Alphen, *The Toronto Star*, 13 May 1999, C1-C5). Crucial to the RFP was that the submissions include details on “related infrastructure for the city such as roads, public transit and sewer systems” (Van Alphen, *The Toronto Star*, 13 May 1999, C1-C5). Bitove’s message was clear: “[w]hat we're doing here is not just trying to get the Olympics … We're trying to rebuild the city” (Bitove quoted in Van Alphen, *The Toronto Star*, 13 May 1999, C1-C5).

If we subscribe to Zukin’s (1995) point that city building relies not only on land, labour and capital, but also on the manipulation of symbolic languages of exclusion and entitlement (see Chapter Two) then Bitove’s mentioning that the Olympics could be the catalyst to city growth demonstrated that he understood the power of the symbolic economy. Bitove recognized that the staging of a two week athletic festival would not be enough for a successful bid. He realized that for the Olympics to generate both local and international support it would be necessary for the Olympic spectacle to be paired with placed-based structural improvements. In Zukin’s parlance, the Olympics would have to be framed in a manner to demonstrate that the benefits of hosting were not narrowly distributed. Determining where and how the city might be rebuilt was the subject of the Granite Club meetings, and the new Master Plan released in November of 1999 was the result. After a couple years of gradual build up, the production of urban space had finally reached the top of the agenda. The politicization of this plan is the focus of the next section.

**A politically significant space**

If Harold Peerenboom (THC) and Morley Kells (Ontario Olympic Commissioner) were convinced that placing an athletes’ village in the portlands was irresponsible, then
we might wonder: how did Bitove’s Master Plan gain the political support necessary to be credible? It is here that we find the merging of the Olympics symbol and waterfront development.

John Lorinc (2001) identifies a number of factors that made TO-Bid’s revised plan plausible. First, Lorinc explains that many appointees to the new Toronto Port Authority (TPA) were friendly to the bid (i.e. Jim Ginou and Robert Wright). Cutting to the heart of the matter, Lorinc (2001, online) argued “the port authority, which has a history of blocking non-industrial uses of the port lands, would not be an obstacle in the Olympic planning process.” A review of the minutes of the meetings from the Toronto Port Authority confirms that the new agency was far more agreeable to the bid team’s plans. A second boost to TO-Bid’s Master Plan came in the form of city planning document entitled, “Unlocking Toronto’s Port Lands: Directions for the Future.”\(^{64}\) The report argued that it was time for the Port lands to reflect mix-used planning. While not disregarding the mix of industrial buildings in the area, the report illustrated that a significant amount of vacant land in the port could become more purposeful. Specifically it was indicated that residential and commercial interests could be woven into the urban fabric. This was a crucial document because it provided the basis for land-use zoning changes in the area. As Jeff Evenson (2004) explains, “nothing of the Olympic bid could have gone forward had that not taken place.” The document provided the opportunity to imagine a different future for the port. The challenge, Micheal Valpy (The Globe and Mail, 13 July 1999, A10) explained, was that an accommodating vision had not yet emerged. Wallace Immen (The Globe and Mail, 19 July 1999, A1) posed the problem as a question: “Port lands: great location but what to do with it?” The Olympic bid officials

\(^{64}\) See Toronto Urban Planning and Development Service. 1999.
were simply the newest of a long list of claimants, including industrialists, leisure enthusiasts, real estate developers, and big box retailers who sought to define the port lands (see Chapter Eight). Still, an opportunity now presented itself through the mechanism of relaxed zoning controls. The critical question was: could an Olympic concept which required numerous sport installations be tied to a waterfront concept promising much more?

As Lorinc (2001) explains, this was the question of concern when bid team members and political officials met in Winnipeg during the 1999 Pan American Games. Bitove invited Harris and Lastman to his Winnipeg hotel suite to consider the new plan [developed during the Granite Club meetings], as Doug Hamilton, Steve Hudson, Jim Ginou and Joe Halstead looked on. “Harris stood up,” Bitove recalls, “and said, “Mel, if you want your waterfront, we have to go for the whole thing.” He warned Lastman he would tolerate no shady land deals. “I love it,” Lastman said, “but I’m going to need help.” Not long afterwards, he released his “waterfront vision,” to bolster political support for the Bitove plan. (Lorinc 2001, online)

There was, however, one sticking point that emerged during the Pan American Games. Federal Heritage Minister Sheila Copps made it clear that the federal government’s commitment would not be forthcoming if TO-Bid did not disperse some of the benefits of hosting. Copps, like Kells, was attempting to ensure that a larger number of communities be linked to the bid. For Copps, the Games had to be Canada’s, not Toronto’s.
An Olympic leverage or leveraging the Olympics?

In response to the continued emphasis by senior levels of government on a decentralized bid, a regional plan was outlined to the members of TO-Bid Board of Directors in October 1999. The new vision had twenty-eight Olympic venues located outside of the city and twenty-seven within Toronto’s political boundaries. We can read this act of venue juggling as a warm-up for the Master Plan that would be released the following month. It was an opportunity to gage reaction to the transfer of the main stadium from the CNE grounds to the Portlands. One critical columnist refused to be sold on the new plan, as he reminded his readers that “the venue plans are all watercolour dreams” until the twenty-eight international sporting federations (recognized by the IOC) sign off on the bid proposals (Byers, The Toronto Star, 9 October 1999, E8). TO-Bid’s Sport and Venues Chair, Doug Hamilton, conceded that “[w]e sort of have two masters here” with politicians and the heads of the various sporting federations seeking to protect their constituencies (Hamilton quoted in Byers The Toronto Star, 9 October 1999, E8).

However, even with a redistributed number of venues the waterfront concept remained intact; there would still be a concentration of principal facilities somewhere on the waterfront. The question was: where on the waterfront? The answer that was being whispered with increasing regularity was the portlands.

In short order, Mayor Lastman released another critical planning document entitled, “Our Toronto Waterfront—The Wave of the Future” (1999).65 The document reflected the giddy not gritty side of city building. Like many of the visions that preceded it, the report lacked concrete ideas on how to achieve the stated objectives but promoted a

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clean, green, accessible waterfront that mixed heritage preservation with new residential accommodations. It was a report that continued the lengthy tradition of grandiose waterfront dreaming in the city, or as one critic put it, “a meaningless shopping list of generic urban pieces” (Rochon, *The Globe and Mail*, 29 November 1999, R3). The link to the Olympics was subtle: “[o]ur waterfront vision is big enough to embrace the 2008 Summer Olympics. We’ll be proud to show our new face to the world. But we intend to realize this vision with or without the Olympics—it’s just too important to the people who make Toronto their home, and to the whole of Ontario” (City of Toronto, 1999, 3).

Paul Bedford and David Crombie emphasized that Lastman’s vision had been the culmination of years worth of planning work, nevertheless the connection to the Olympic bid could not be ignored. The province demonstrated its interest by establishing a waterfront development agency and assigned Morley Kells the additional responsibility. Crucial to the report was the proposed formation of an intergovernmental waterfront task force. It emphasized that the necessary political will existed and that the jurisdictional gridlock that had hampered waterfront redevelopment could finally be overcome.

The occasion to announce the proposed task force came on the afternoon of November 3, 1999 when Mayor Lastman, Premier Harris and Prime Minister Chrétien stood shoulder-to-shoulder on a podium in the city’s Port lands. Prime Minister Chrétien also used the opportunity offer his full support for Toronto’s Olympic bid. Intriguingly, Lorinc (July 2001, online) reports that the task force “would be chaired by Toronto financier Robert Fung” while the “actual research work was assigned to a who’s who of urban planners and architects, with Longden’s firm, MMM, providing the technical advice.” More pointedly, Lorinc argues that it was Longden’s job to “make certain the
task force’s ultimate recommendations fit with Bitove’s Olympic plan” (Lorinc 2001, online). It should also be noted that Robert Wright (Chairman of the Toronto Port Authority) and Steven Hudson (Chair of the Executive Committee for TO-Bid) were part of the Task Force.

TO-Bid’s Master Plan, with its three rings of activity, surfaced just days after the announcement of the tri-government waterfront task force. Reporters reviewed the plan with a healthy degree of skepticism. Don Wanagas (National Post, 10 November 1999, A21) referred to the vision as “virtual reality.” James Christie (The Globe and Mail, 10 November 1999, S1) thought that TO-Bid’s ideas “might be better termed a philosophy or wish-list than a hard plan.” Nearly all of the reporters drew attention to the fact that fiscal reality would ultimately limit the final product. John Sewell (Now, 11-17 November 1999) called Lastman’s waterfront plans “illusory” and expressed concern over the speed at which TO-Bid was seeking to have its Olympic plan “rushed through city council.” In Sewell’s opinion it did not matter whether the discussions revolved around waterfront revitalization or Olympic bid development, the critical questioning of financing had not been thoroughly debated. He posed the obvious questions: how could officials consider erecting Olympic housing in “such an expensive place to build?” How should the provision of housing for foreign athletes be read at a time when the city had a severe homeless crisis? But he also asked his readers to consider the wisdom of creating additional sporting facilities in the city:

[m]any of the facilities – a transit line along the waterfront, several large sports performance spaces – would serve no useful urban purpose after the Games were over (Exhibition Stadium was demolished because it had no
users, and Maple Leaf Gardens is endangered), raising the question of whether spending money to build them in the first place is appropriate.

A public discussion about this aspect of the Olympics would produce fireworks – which is why that debate has not been encouraged and will probably never happen. Apparently, the hope is that if a plan is announced after it’s been agreed on, few will have the courage to object. (Sewell, Now, 11-17 November 1999).

The physical plan was said to have been developed by “over 200 individuals” and reemphasized the bid’s guiding principles. It also wove in several city building objectives. In greater detail the Master Plan (Toronto 1999) outlined that the bid and the Olympic Games would work towards: (1) a cleaner environment; (2) the provision of more housing; (3) a more effective transportation network; (4) improved infrastructure; (5) fostering a prosperous economy; (6) the enhancement of parks and open spaces; (6) greater accessibility; and (7) strategic land assembly. Some of these objectives were linked to the public consultation process and the outcomes of various focus group workshops held in the previous year. Other objectives, such as the provision of housing, were said to require further public discussion. The increased tax benefits and employment years from Olympic construction as well as media exposure and increased tourism were among the economic spin-offs offered. On the issue of strategic land assembly, the Master Plan indicated that venue selection was consistent with “the City’s desire for the development of its waterfront as expressed in Unlocking the Port lands” (Toronto Urban Planning & Development Service 1999), although it was noted the bid team would have to engage in a public consultation with those employers and landowners currently
operating in the port area. The link between an Olympic vision and waterfront revitalization was thoroughly outlined. Cutting through the hyperbole we find that the three rings of Olympic activity were to be connected by various processional routes and potted with numerous pavilions, plazas, transportation hubs, restaurants, expositions, stores and public spaces. For the historians who could recall the Crown’s 1818 promise of a public walk on Toronto’s waterfront, the Master Plan’s (Toronto Urban Planning & Development Service 1999) promotion of an Olympic Promenade—designed to be a “major new recreational waterfront promenade” with “no major crossing roads” following the Games—may have seemed to be good to be true.

Without question, the Master Plan provided many with an exciting image. For Cam Cole (National Post, 10 November 1999, B10) there was “an undeniable allure to this vision that, if even half of it came true, might actually be a turning point for a city that seems to be losing the fight to stay ahead of its exploding population.” For James Rusk (The Toronto Star, 3 November 1999, A11), the Olympic bid was the exact political tonic needed to remedy the waterfront. Rusk (The Toronto Star, 3 November 1999, A11) further noted, “[a]n Olympic bid also provides political cover for the two senior levels of government to help Toronto.” Many city councilors saw the potential of the Olympics to secure financing for social housing and transportation initiatives as the real basis for their support (Monsebraaten, The Toronto Star, 10 July 2001, B05). Numerous columnists said what TO-Bid leaders could not, that the Olympics were an opportunity to direct money towards Toronto. For example, John Barber (The Globe and Mail, 14 September 2000, A23) noted: “[p]ersonally, I can’t think of a single good reason to play host to an Olympics if that’s all we get—an Olympics. But if the stupendous cash flows of the
Games can be leveraged to create concrete and permanent improvements of benefit to all Torontonians, bring’em on.” Royson James (*The Toronto Star*, 6 September 2000, B01) was even more succinct, “[i]t doesn’t play well outside of Toronto, but it would be nice to hear someone stand up and say: We’re going to use the Olympics as a grand excuse to pour money into Toronto.” While most councilors and columnists could agree that the Olympics could be used to leverage place-based improvements, they knew that it mattered how and by whom the levers were pulled.

**Framing the Olympic symbol and waterfront space**

During the Olympic bidding process, the Port lands were described as vacant, abandoned, toxic, a wasteland—in short, an urban scar. The thrust of TO-Bid Master Plan, as indicated by the section dedicated to strategic land assembly, was to gain control over significant waterfront land. The challenge that remained was how to convince city councilors, senior governments, the tax-paying public, national sport federations, and the IOC that using this space for the Olympics was appropriate. Further to complicate the task, TO-Bid needed to dissociate public works projects from the Olympic budget. The aim was to segregate the costs associated with waterfront revitalization from the bid’s forecasted construction costs while simultaneously presenting the Olympic Games as a vehicle to stimulate waterfront renewal. Bitove had made his position clear; it was fine to suggest that the Olympics were the catalyst for waterfront development but unfair to expect that the operating budget of a two week athletic event should have to incorporate longer-term infrastructure goals. The message was that costly city-building activities such as the demolition of buildings, soil remediation, the relocation of businesses, flood-proofing, roads, underground services and so on—all required to make the port lands site...
workable—would not and *should not* be included in the final Olympic budget. The bricks and mortar of the physical plan that had been nicely packaged by TO-Bid still required City Council approval; the financial agreements and legal assurances with senior levels of governments demanded clarification; and finally, the IOC had to be introduced to the concept. But what was at stake now was something far greater than hosting the Olympics. If the Port lands had come to be emblematic of the decline of Toronto, then the Olympic bid’s heavy reliance on this site suggested that the area was ripe for redefinition. For those caught up in Olympic fever, a successful bid represented the city’s rebirth. And yet, the important question that remained was: would waterfront development be anchored to a successful Olympic bid or would the Olympics be moored to a larger redevelopment strategy?

The vision outlined in the Master Plan was to be used for discussions with City of Toronto staff and as the basis for community consultations. The Master Plan highlighted that the Community Social Planning Council (CSPC) of Toronto had been contracted by TO-Bid to determine the impact the Olympic Games may have on groups, organizations and people. It was further indicated that the CSPC would also orchestrate the second major public consultative effort. However, while the CSPC had begun their work prior to the release of the Master Plan, it had concentrated on the social impacts of the Olympic Games and had only completed a literature review of when the Master Plan was released (The Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, 2000a; The Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, 2000b). The second wave of consultation called for a telephone survey, a widely distributed self-report questionnaire, as well as Town Hall meetings in all twenty-eight wards, plus an additional twenty-two focus group
discussions. It was mid-November 1999 and TO-Bid need City Council’s full endorsement of the Master Plan by February 2000. This left only a few months to conduct the consultations. It was noted that only the preliminary findings of the CSPC would be ready for the Council’s vote, with “[t]he complete report…due at the end of March.” Close readers of the Master Plan would discover that the public would also be able influence the vision by becoming involved with the Official Plan Amendment process and the Environmental Assessment. The Master Plan ended with the following statement:

[a]fter all suggestions for change and improvement have been received from the private sector and other stakeholder and community groups and we have agreement from senior levels of government, the final version of the Master Plan will form the basis of our candidate file—our formal submission to the IOC. (Toronto Urban Planning & Development Service 1999)

By the end of 1999, the coupling of the Olympic bid to a broader waterfront development strategy had been ushered through a number of steps in the political process. TO-Bid had managed to tap into the process of producing space and had imposed a particular order to Toronto’s shoreline. Yet, many remained wary of the spatial claims that TO-Bid had made with its Master Plan. For example, Ken Greenberg (Greenberg 2004) claims that the Master Plan and the bid books that followed were “very well orchestrated,” that the presentation made it difficult to know the true “substance” of the project. The specifics were largely “impenetrable” in his opinion. Greenberg (Greenberg 2004) reasoned that the “hubris became overwhelming, to the point where people were
snowed by it.” He hypothesizes that it could have been linked to the city’s “anxiety over world-class status” or to a “deep-seated inferiority complex;” he sensed that people “were prepared to buy the whole story because it sounded appealing” (Greenberg 2004). Greenberg thought that the effects of amalgamation may have contributed to a sense of disillusionment. He argued that “people were so shell shocked and upset about what was happening in their own neighbourhoods and seemingly removed from the process …[that] it was very difficult to know what was going on” (Greenberg 2004). Part of the problem he explained was that there was “no city wide infrastructure of people focused on the waterfront.” The Port lands in particular, he claimed, were “geographically remote and unknown” (Greenberg 2004). Greenberg’s impression was consistent with a view that Jeffrey Stinson had established nearly a decade earlier. Stinson (1990, 1) argued that, the Port Industrial District does not have a large and devoted constituency of people who value it as would be the case if it were an older residential or commercial area…for most people it is simply terra incognita. General perceptions of the District, where they exist at all, are likely to be inaccurate or incomplete. They form a poor basis for the kind of political action which will determine the future of the area.

It is true that the Port lands lacked a dedicated residential community such as the Parkdale neighbourhood that borders the CNE grounds to the west, but in the days following the release of the Master Plan it became evident that there were still those who sought to prevent the proposed Olympic encroachment. It was evident that both BIDCO and TO-Bid had failed to heed Paul Bedford’s advice when he suggested that they hold meetings with the various stakeholders in the port. The release of the physical plan
sparked “waterfront anger” from some industrial and commercial owners in the port (Wong, *The Toronto Star*, 13 November 1999, E1). Following the announcement of the Master Plan Jack Layton argued “[t]here was really no consultation process here. There was an announcement that the whole area where their factories are was going to be a stadium. That was the consultation” (Layton quoted in Acharaya, *The Toronto Star*, 25 November 1999, 1). David Crombie (Crombie 2004a) admits that he “did not get into the site decisions all that much.” He does concede that he favoured the CNE/Ontario Place focus and acknowledges that “it was clearly more expensive go east then west” but maintained “other people…had the view that if you are really going to use the power of the Olympics to take, to use ground that has not been ploughed, then you go out to the portlands in the east” (Crombie 2004a). This idea, he explained was “not offensive” to him, and he pointed out that he “had spent the previous years trying to crack the power … of the Harbour Commission and its ownership of land” (Crombie 2004a).

The connection of the Olympic bid to waterfront development, Jeff Evenson (Evenson 2004) emphasizes, forced many people to ask: “[i]s this the guy [Bitove] who is privatizing the waterfront?” He further noted that while most people supported the Olympics, they remained “resistant to the privatization of the waterfront” (Evenson 2004). He suggested: “[t]hey might not understand development economics, they might not understand investment cycles, they don’t understand appropriate rates of return that allow for urban development, but they know whether something is being privatized” (Evenson 2004). For Evenson, the necessity of demonstrating “legitimacy” and “believability” were the two challenges leading into the final vote of City Council.
A malleable message

In Chapter Two I argued that perception is crucial in the formation of legitimate representations and explained that those able to exert a powerful influence over social imagination are well positioned to shape the contours of the city’s spatial development. It was during winter of 2000 when the deliberate attempt to attach positive social meanings to the Olympic bid and waterfront redevelopment was on full display. Numerous city staff reports and newspaper columns appealed to civic pride and identity and touted the benefits of revitalization and growth that the Olympics represented. The staff report of 11 February 2000 was the most significant because it recommended that City Council approve the application of TO-Bid and the COA to be considered by the IOC as the host city for the 2008 Olympic Games (City of Toronto 2000c). The report lavishly listed all of the associated benefits of hosting. There was something for everyone. New Olympic housing would lead to new neighbourhoods following the Games. The diversity and quality of competition venues would encourage greater participation rates and create better athletes. The creation of national acclimatization centers would spread the benefits of the Games across the country. The legacy of an endowment fund would provide a much needed boost to the sport system in Canada. The “retrofit of Toronto’s aging cultural facilities”, the increased tourism and greater publicity would help Toronto gain world class status. The possibility of new corporate partnerships, volunteer development and a healthier population would enhance the quality of life in Toronto (City of Toronto 2000c). It was obvious that city staff shared both Crombie’s and Bitove’s view that the Olympics could be an exercise in city building: the report offered a broad definition of what that might mean (City of Toronto 2000c). James Christie (The Globe and Mail, 15
February 2000, S2) argued that “[t]he staff report stops just short of calling the Olympic Games a civic cure-all” even though Bitove had repeatedly stressed that the Olympics could not be a panacea for all of the city’s problems. Bitove did, however, continue to argue that the Olympics could revive the waterfront. The staff report also shared Bitove’s view that most of the infrastructure costs should not be included in the Olympic Games budget. Crucially the report also indicated that the IOC would be outlining details of the bidding process to interested NOC’s and cities in late February and that it was essential that TO-Bid receive Council’s endorsement prior to this gathering.

The release of the staff report was followed by a more-than-nine-hour meeting of the Economic Development and Parks Committee (17 February 2000), a grueling session that one reporter referred to as the taxpayers’ “last chance to influence the city’s 2008 Olympic bid” (Byers, The Toronto Star, 16 February 2000, A7). The meeting began with David Crombie rearticulating the bid’s overarching principles and highlighting the powerful momentum on the issue of waterfront development which the bid had generated. Crombie was followed by Bitove who stressed the five physical principles that the Master Plan sought to address: more housing, greater accessibility, environmental improvements, improved infrastructure and a more vibrant economy that was “commercially balanced and financially sound.” Joe Halstead gleefully reported the value of new venues and cultural attractions that the Olympics would bring and suggested that the risks were manageable. Other bid officials commented on more specific items such as additional affordable housing. Athletes Curtis Hibert and Jeff Adams referred to the “incredible magic” of the Olympic Games and argued that the Olympics could inspire kids and be an agent for positive social change in the community. A member of TO-Bid’s
community outreach committee, Rahul Bhardwaj, reminded the audience that social
capacity needs to be attached to a project and a place. He argued that the Olympics could
help create a new generation of leadership, foster civic engagement, promote Toronto’s
diversity and that it could create new opportunities for culture and recreation. And
finally, there was the Olympic link to the waterfront. Robert Fung called the Olympics
the “sparkplug” that would lead to total waterfront revitalization. Fung conveyed to the
committee that the city had lost much of its international clout and that if they wanted to
support the waterfront, then they should support the Olympic bid. Reminding the
committee that the waterfront was “the most public of all places”, Paul Bedford indicated
his comfort with TO-Bid’s Master Plan. He argued that the Olympics would help address
environmental remediation, would integrate the Port lands into the existing urban fabric
and would stimulate physical change. For Bedford, the bid’s focus was “consistent with
emergent planning” (City of Toronto 2000a; City of Toronto 2000b).

All of the above presenters spoke with care and conviction, their comments truly
reflecting the malleability of the Olympic symbol and the spirit of Olympism. Their
presentations were followed by more than eighty deputations by members of city staff,
representatives of diverse groups, politicians and individual citizens. Interestingly, there
was a motion prior to the commencement of the deputations that “the questioning of the
deputations be limited to one per committee member due to the number of deputations to
be heard at today’s meeting”. This motion carried. This condition ultimately affected the
quality of the debate. There was really never an opportunity to establish a forum of
communicative rationality that Habermas emphasizes. Nevertheless, calls for a
referendum were renewed and some requested that council postpone their decision so that
firm commitments could be established. Others expressed the desire for more public consultation. A representative from the Federation of Metro Tenants Association expressed concern over the transfer of public lands into private hands. Social housing advocates demanded greater protection for tenants. Requests for an impartial audit were raised. Meanwhile, other representatives applauded TO-Bid’s efforts. For example, a mass of construction workers openly supported the bid, no doubt lured by the lofty employment projections that Halstead and Lastman had promised. As the meeting moved from one deputant to another, a lack of sustained discussion on individual issues was apparent. As with the public meetings that had previously occurred, the day was not about listening to the public’s use of its reason; it was an exercise in cataloging potential benefits and concerns. Crucial to the occasion was the attempt by TO-Bid and city officials to get the citizenry thinking about the values of Olympism and not simply the Games themselves (City of Toronto 2000a; City of Toronto 2000b).

The Economic Development and Parks Committee again voted overwhelmingly (8-0) to support the bid. The substantial document that was produced for Council following the meeting mimicked the tone of the city’s staff report. The Olympic Games were said to represent an opportunity for “unparalleled international exposure” and could “help to advance the City’s revitalization of the waterfront by a decade.” Once again, infrastructure and land costs were presented as separate from the Olympic costs. The report confirmed that there would be the possibility of economic displacement because of the Games (i.e. business in the port lands), but articulated that economic experience of cities previously hosting the Olympics indicated the potential for greater economic returns. In one of the few references to the consultation process the report highlighted
that “considerable concern was voiced… that the Olympic Games will cause an increase in evictions, higher rents and conversion of low rent housing to other uses.” The report acknowledged that research on previous Olympic Games and other hallmark events validated these concerns.66

On February 29, 2000, Council confirmed its support for the bid, voting 54-2 to proceed. The promise of new social housing and waterfront development, a warning from the Waterfront Revitalization Task Force chair, Robert Fung, that the city was in decline, as well as some last minute assurances from senior levels of government helped the local councilors reach their decisions. The numerous references to a revitalized waterfront indicated that this vote was as much about public works as it was about velodromes or aquatic centers. Despite offering a limited number of specifics, TO-Bid had instructed councilors as one reporter put it, take a “leap of faith” (Wanagas, National Post, 29 February 2000, p.?). If Council’s support during the previous stage in the bidding process was based on the understanding that they would get another opportunity to inspect the details of the bid, this time around a good portion of their endorsement was again based on trust. Commenting on the apparent lack of “street-level enthusiasm” Rosalyn James (The Toronto Star, 1 March 2000, A1) argued that “you don’t hear the opinions because the mass of people who support the Olympic Games don’t live in midtown or North Toronto; they’re not the old Toronto intelligentsia who have access to the media and whose opinions are regularly sought.” Another possible explanation was provided by Councilor Kyle Rae who summarized the difficulty with the bidding process in the following way: “[i]t feels like pre-pre-pre-planning. The process is so distanced, it feels so far away from anything tangible that there’s no sense of heightened anticipation”

(Councilor Kyle Rae quoted in Sewell, *Eye*, 17 February 2000, 14). Or perhaps, as Greenberg has indicated, the citizenry was simply tired. The IOC’s decision was still nineteen months away. City Council’s decision had been made, the international lobbying could finally begin.

**Regulating Waterfront Land and the Public Interest**

Following Toronto City Council’s resounding endorsement of TO-Bid’s Master Plan, attention turned to the release of the Waterfront Revitalization Task Force report. Called *Our Toronto Waterfront: Gateway to the New Canada* (2000), the report made clear Toronto’s struggle to keep pace with other cities in process of city building in general and waterfront development in particular. Pointing to the difficulties of conflicting governance and ownership, residual industrial activity, polluted land, inadequate infrastructure and a host of other complications, the report claimed that Toronto’s waterfront had a history of missed investment. At the same time, the report maintained that there was “an astonishing opportunity” for restructuring (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force, 2000). Drawing attention to the vast tracts of land in public ownerships the report emphasized that there was “a special opportunity for the public to catalyze reinvestment and recapture costs.” The Olympic bid was deemed crucial to this opportunity. The Olympic bid was once again said to be providing the spark as well as creating a timeframe for redevelopment.

The report revealed that Toronto had not witnessed major development “east of Yonge Street in the Central Waterfront for decades.” In particular it proposed that the Port lands had become “a void in the life of the City.” Using the plans of TO-Bid’s Master Plan, the Task Force foresaw the formation of a new urban district in the area.
According to the Task Force, this new “Olympic District” had the potential to contain “an avenue of sports” and could extend the urban fabric to the lake. While the Task Force report expressed dismay that the waterfront had been ignored for so long, it conveyed excitement regarding the overall amount of land available noting “Toronto appears to be virtually alone among the world cities in still possessing such widespread land abandonment and opportunity in its Central Waterfront.” In particular, the Port lands were said to have nearly 80% of its developable land in public ownership (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force, 2000).

The idea of public involvement in the ownership of land is often cited as important for the maintenance of the public interest or public good. But as Joe Berridge, Partner in Urban Strategies and consultant to the Waterfront Revitalization Task Force, notes, this is always a delicate argument. When we talk about concepts such as the public good or public interest we risk creating the impression that there is a single public. For Berridge, “you don’t always act in the public interest when you develop public land” because this “assumes that there is a simple [sic] interest of what the public interest is and that that interest is unitary” (Berridge 2004). He argues that “the simple equation between public land and public interest assumes that there are simple answers to these questions, which there aren’t.” Using the examples of Toronto’s Exhibition and Ontario Place, Berridge demonstrates the difficulty of defining the public interest.

What is the public interest in respect to those lands [Exhibition Place or Ontario Place]? It is not very easy to define, they are losing money, is that in the public interest? They are huge parking lots, is that in the public interest? They are land that are used for not much of the year, is that in the
public interest? Or is the public interest better served by putting them to much more intensive use and returning those receipts back to the public coffers, which would enable other public goals to be made? (Berridge 2004)

When the development of a particular parcel of land is said to be in the public interest then, it suggests that city residents from a wide variety of publics have collaborated and developed a shared and agreed upon position about how development should proceed. It is important to recognize as Leonie Sandercock and Kim Dovey (2002, 152) have, that “[t]he public interest can never be pre-established, but is constructed in and through democratic public debate … Thus, the public interest relies upon a broad exploration of alternatives and a rich urban imagination as a prerequisite to informed debate.” The authors go on to say, however, that “this exploration is a highly political, discursive practice in which the potential for manipulation, seduction, and legitimation should not be underestimated” (Sandercock & Dovey 2002, 152).

In an earlier chapter I demonstrated that waterfront renewal in Toronto has been an ongoing process shaped by numerous parties who have often had conflicting opinions. The Task Force’s report made it clear that waterfront development had been stalled because of the absence of consensus:

[though a number of excellent concepts and proposals have been formulated, including and most notably the ecosystems approach developed by the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, there is no agreed vision of the Central Waterfront’s future among governments or in the public mind. From Barcelona to Cape Town to New York, experience shows that
such an agreed vision is required to galvanize energies and investment.

(Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force, 2000)

Jeffrey Simpson (The Globe and Mail, 7 April 2000, A15) was less kind:

[a] quick glance at today’s waterfront reveals how little was accomplished.

It remains a hodgepodge of residential development, parkland, industry and vacant lots, constituting one of the most glaring examples of a botched urban opportunity in North America.

The word opportunity is critical in the above quotation. For Berridge (Berridge 2004), there is an “opportunity cost” to leaving a massive amount of land idle. He notes, “if you want to stop a city from sprawling forever, then you better find a good brownfield alternative to that sprawl” (Berridge 2004). The waterfront Task Force put this idea to work. Citing the recent attempts to gentrify the waterfront, both through residential and commercial development, the Task Force suggested that it was important to seize upon the “focus and sense of urgency” that the Olympic bid provided. Waterfront development represented an opportunity to offset the “centrifugal forces” that had caused the city to sprawl. In addition, the Task Force recommended the deconstruction of the Gardiner expressway in order to reconnect the citizenry with the waterfront (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force, 2000). Nearly all of the points that addressed the phasing of the revitalization strategy began with a successful Olympic bid.

The problem, of course, as Eric Reguly (The Toronto Star, 31 April 2000) reminded everyone, was that: “[t]he common feature of all waterfront restorations, from Barcelona to Boston, is a central agency with godlike powers to implement the development plans, including fundraising and land expropriation, without some level of
government gumming up the works with veto rights and the like.” The Task Force claimed that the lack of an effective operational mechanism in the form of a single development corporation had made redevelopment impossible and it recommended that such a development corporation be formed and be given significant power including: its own legal persona, with an ability to acquire, hold and dispose of property, raise financing and be a party to transactions and legal proceedings in its own name. The corporation must have effective control of the development of all waterfront lands, implementing a previously agreed upon overall plan. (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force, 2000)

While all three governments celebrated the development concept outlined by the Task Force, each of them paused on the issue of empowerment. It was clear that the political risks of instituting such an agency in Toronto were enormous. The idea that the agency had to own the land that it was to develop was eerily familiar to the strategy of the Toronto Harbour Commission. In addition, the Task Force had indicated that the private sector would pick up seventy percent of the proposed twelve billion dollar cost, which left the various government officials contemplating their own shares. Interestingly, when weighing the overall costs of redeveloping the waterfront, there was a sense that winning the Olympics would actually represent a savings. The possibility of the Olympics securing more than a billion dollars through the IOC’s broadcasting and sponsorship packages and perhaps even a greater sum through ticket sales made the Olympic “sparkplug” even more attractive. As the editor of The Globe and Mail (1 March 2000, 14) nicely summarized, “[t]he waterfront vision is too important to be contingent on
winning the Olympics; but politics being politics, it’s hard to overestimate the power of
an Olympic bid.”

The dilemma of redeveloping Toronto’s waterfront, Berridge notes, can be linked
to vision, supply and demand. It is important to note that Berridge offered all of his
opinions with the knowledge that Toronto had failed to win the Olympic bid.
Nevertheless, his insights help to reinforce why Crombie felt that a powerful project
would be necessary to provide clarity and definition to Toronto’s waterfront (see above).
Berridge (2004) noted: “I’m not sure there is a vision of what the Toronto waterfront
should be.” Identifying what he referred to as multiple “absolutist constituencies”, he
explained that the city’s waterfront plans and the Fung waterfront plan were “attempts to
create a united vision” that “probably get close to a shared vision at a high level, but that
vision tends to break down when you get down to the lower levels” (Berridge 2004). The
vision “fractures” at the local level Berridge opined. For Berridge “vision has to be
attached to some mobilization of resources to achieve it” and he thought that the
Olympics were one mechanism to “make urban development exciting.” From this
perspective Berridge explains why it was easy to find the Olympics alluring; they
represented an opportunity of a different sort, one that would “test the character of the
city” and reroute money back into Toronto. “This city” he noted, “contributes to the
Canadian economy some $9 billion a year in taxes more than it gets back in services …
In that context a $5 billion Olympic project doesn’t look so bad” (Berridge 2004). He
further noted, “having the vision is easy… What is hard to do is to get it built and to get it
built really well.” Part of the difficulty can be linked to a demand problem: “[t]here is an
assumption that the waterfront is a hugely desirable place for people to live and work and
recreate … it is not clear that there is a huge employment demand for these lands” (Berridge 2004). In the absence of demand for office space and with no ability to create a big cultural destination Berridge explained that “you run the very big risk of developing this area as a huge domestic neighbourhood.” If this were to happen it would go against the grain of Toronto’s pattern of mixed-use neighbourhoods. What makes the Olympic Games unique according to Berridge is that they ensure variety. Referring to the Port lands, Berridge indicated that there are a “lot of people who would say that this land has a negative value” because “it is un-serviced, there are environmental soil remediation problems … no water supply” (Berridge 2004). Berridge asks: “where is the money going to come to address these issues?” He explained that the Olympic bid tied into a larger waterfront revitalization scheme was the proposed answer.

There is, however, something at stake when a city aligns their redevelopment strategy with the trajectory required by the IOC. With expenditures amounting to billions of dollars if the bid is successful and tens of millions if it is not, going after the Olympics requires a commitment far greater than that required for a new office block (i.e. Metro Hall), stadium (SkyDome), festive marketplace (Harbourfront), or a downtown park.

**Assessing the Bid: Conflicting Viewpoints**

While government supporters, city councilors and the citizenry contemplated the implications of the Task Force’s findings and mulled over the recommendations, representatives of TO-Bid did not have the luxury of stalling. The bid group had to provide the IOC with answers to a series of questions relating to Toronto’s suitability as a host city by June 20, 2000. The task was daunting: to convince the IOC evaluation team that an environmentally degraded and poorly supplied waterfront site that still housed an
operating port and was plagued by jurisdictional complexities held the potential for Olympian grandeur.

Intriguingly, to look at the results of the IOC’s preliminary evaluation is to discover that concern was expressed over the proposed location of the Olympic village and the heavy emphasis on the Port lands. The IOC evaluation team also questioned the feasibility of the regional distribution of some of the events. In addition, the working group noted: “[i]t is not known to what extent Olympic land development on Lake Ontario is feasible” (IOC 2000b). While the IOC stressed that Toronto’s bid was strong, it also indicated that the competition was tough, with Paris earning the highest praise. Taken aback by some of the lower marks, TO-Bid members indicated that they would have to explain the concept with greater clarity seeing as they remained committed to a waterfront Games. Their commitment represented a real problem for many bid critics who feared that the domestic concerns that had surfaced over the previous two years would now be swept aside in the attempt to accommodate international wishes (Anderson, Now, 31 August – 6 September, 2000).

The most dramatic blow to the bid during the spring and summer of 2000 was not the IOC’s evaluation; it was Morley Kells’ resignation from his post as the Province’s Olympics Commissioner. Kells did not go quietly. He remained convinced that the Port lands were an unnecessary risk and a financial sinkhole for provincial tax payers. He argued that the government was trying to “piggyback private development of Toronto’s

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67 Applicant cities were awarding numeric grades (using Decision Matrix software) for a number of technical assessment criteria including: general infrastructure, sports infrastructure, Olympic village plan, transportation, security, accommodations, previous sporting hosting experience, government support and public opinion, environmental conditions. While Toronto earned favourable grades in most categories, TO-Bid’s Olympic village plan was given a minimum grade of 5.9 and a maximum grade of 8.0 (out of 10) and the IOC expressed concern over congestion and security.
waterfront on its Olympic bid via a “back door deal” that could end up costing taxpayers billions” (Daily Commercial News and Construction Record, April 10, 2000, vol. 73, A1). According to Kells, it was Bitove, Hudson, Harris and “other wheeler and dealers” who “wanted to do a big, big, thing on the waterfront” (Kells 2004). The problem, he noted, was that much of the land remained questionable. His concern was justifiable. Readers of the newspaper and those knowledgeable about Toronto’s waterfront were familiar with the numerous toxic hot spots that littered the Port lands. It remained unclear how expensive an environmental clean-up of the Olympic site would be, as TO-Bid’s engineering consultants had yet to complete their environmental assessment (McAndrew, The Toronto Star, 18 March 2000, B1). For Kells, redeveloping the industrial tracts in the Port lands meant that the public “would [get] stuck for a hell of a lot of money” (Kells 2004). Kells did not see the logic of the Port lands site. He explained that he had commissioned a study to see if the Olympics could be staged primarily on the Canadian National Exhibition and Ontario Place grounds, but noted he “ran into this pressure play by the big boys who wanted it where they wanted it” (Kells 2004). Kells further explained that Richard Pound had recommended using the SkyDome instead of building a new stadium and as a result Kells felt that the Olympic plan “should be divorced from the Fung plan” (Kells 2004). Kells believed in the power of the Olympics to help redefine Toronto’s sporting culture and to aid with waterfront development, but he did not feel that TO-Bid should dictate where the venues should go. He thought the Games should be staged on “land that’s already owned by the public, whether by the city of Toronto or the province of Ontario.”

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68 See the comments by Morley Kells during the November 1st, 1999 meeting of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Available at http://hansardindex.ontla.on.ca/hansardeissue/37-1/1007a.htm
Kells’s insistence on choosing an alternate site led many, he claims, to circumvent the Office of the Olympics Commissioner in favour of consulting with Premier Harris’s chief of staff, Ron McLaughlin. “I could show you my phone log” he commented, “all of a sudden there was no more calls” (Kells 2004). It was impossible for him to exercise responsibility, he said, having been “cut out” of the process. Although he voiced his displeasure to the Premier, the situation did not improve. Kells said he knew “the squeeze was on” so he quit in order to have the freedom to express his concerns. He made his view known through the use of the newspapers, arguing that the Port lands were not obsolete—as was being portrayed by TO-Bid and the Fung report—with many parcels of land locked up in long-term leases and more than twenty properties in private hands (Kells 2004). In one article he informed his readers that there were at least a couple of leases where “the details have never been made public” that would require compensation both in the event that the Olympic bid was successful or if the Fung proposal proceeded as planned (Kells, National Post, 1 June 2000, C19). The citizenry could not reasonably calculate the costs of the Olympics without this information he claimed (Kells 2004). Kells also drew attention to the fact that costs had not been allocated for the tearing down of the provincially owned Hearn Generating Station or for the removal or transfer of the port. In short, he argued, there were simply too many negotiations to which he was not privy and too many of his concerns that were unanswered or disregarded. Because he represented the taxpayers of the province, he felt that it was prudent to quit: “I’m not putting my name on anything that I don’t think the public is being protected on” (Kells 2004). His point was simple: “[w]hy take a multi-billion-dollar gamble when we can obtain most of what we want to achieve with phased-in incremental development? Why
not first see if Toronto lands the Olympics, and then stage them on lands already in public ownership” (Kells, *National Post*, 1 June 2000, C19)? To be clear, Kells was not opposed to the Olympic bid, rather he was convinced that the link between the Fung report and the Olympics was unwise. He felt that the public was being duped: “I don’t want to do anything to hurt the Olympic bid. I’m very positive about that. But I just don’t think it should be tied to the big picture. I don’t think the public understands the big picture. It hasn’t been explained to them” (Kells quoted in Mackie, *Globe and Mail*, 7 April 2000, A18).

Other knowledgeable actors shared Kells’ concern. A former member of the Toronto Harbour Commission, Gary Reid, felt that the idea of replacing the port with sport was a misguided proposition. Referring to Toronto’s Skydome and Montreal’s Olympic Stadium he argued that the “real sports legacy in this country is endless taxpayer supported subsidies” (Reid, *Our Toronto Free Press*, 28 February – 14 March, 2000). Reid claimed that representations purporting to show the port’s decline were mere propaganda. Drawing attention to a study conducted by the Toronto Port Authority (1999), Reid pointed out that the economic contribution of the port to the GTA was significantly greater than the CNE or other “creative” jobs such as those found in the film industry to the city. Reid acknowledged that the eastern port lands “were not pretty” but maintained that continued industrial productivity was no small achievement given the city’s fiscal challenges. Reid (*Toronto Free Press*, 28 February – 14 March, 2000) left his readers with the following thought: “[t]he question is what we have to pay for “pretty”. Do we really wish to sacrifice established, proven economic benefit for aesthetics?”
The waterfront Task Force had correctly indicated that most of the port lands were in public ownership (80%) (Figure 10.2).

![Figure 10.2. Public versus private ownership of land along Toronto's waterfront](source: Our Toronto Waterfront: Gateway to the New Canada, 2000, 17)

Nevertheless, Kells had identified that different levels of government owned various portions of the port lands and represented multiple publics. He further indicated that private interests still controlled crucial acreage when considering the proposed sites of the Olympic facilities. For the bid to be transparent Kells argued the real estate transactions had to be exposed (Kells 2004). He pleaded with his readers critically to examine the symbolic characterization of Toronto’s waterfront and to question the framing of the proposed vision (Kells, The Toronto Star, 27 October 2000, A17; Kells, National Post, 1 June 2000, C19).

Through access to the media and through public decrees and proclamations of bid and public officials, the Port lands were said to be anemic, an area of decline, an example
of urban neglect, abandoned, and a scar in the urban fabric. The waterfront in general was represented as a site of social and spatial disorganization disconnected from the city and vastly unutilized (Figure 10.3). The enormous amount of ‘available’ land was presented as a “terrain of opportunity”, with the Olympic bid acting as “testing ground for new ideas about urban form” (Greenberg 1996, 195, 217).

Figure 10.3. The Toronto Portlands (Source: Orthophoto mosaic provided by the City of Kingston)

Without doubt, many thought it would be a wonderful accomplishment to connect the portlands to the downtown. Standing at ground level and looking towards the city centre we find that the view is stunning (Figure 10.4).
The lack of accessibility to this area of Toronto deprives the populace of an intriguing view of their city. Kells did not believe that the Olympics were an appropriate vehicle to create this connection.

John Bitove acknowledged that Kells’ concerns were valid, but the CEO of TO-Bid claimed that the area was the front door of the city and Toronto could not leave it looking like an eye-sore (Bitove 2004). The difference of opinion was cleverly spun by TO-Bid’s public relations experts as a question of whether Toronto could afford not to redevelop its waterfront. It was similar to asking people at consultation meetings what legacies they would like to get out of the Olympics instead of asking them if they wanted the Olympics in the first place. It was not the issue Morley Kells was posing. Instead Kells was asking the citizenry to consider a far more nuanced situation that took into account the various layers of land ownership that existed in the Port lands. Had he expressed his concern pictorially it would have appeared as follows.
There was a reason why development had stagnated in this area, and Kells wanted to remind his audience to think about the area not as a site of stadiums, stunning views, and sandy beaches, but as political quicksand. Kells argued that people did not have to look beyond TO-Bid’s insistence on the separation of the Olympics operational costs from the necessary capital costs to begin to realize what was at stake. TO-Bid’s imagery was based on somebody else’s commitment to infrastructure and investment he argued. In short, Kells claimed that the citizenry was being enticed by the clever framing of the Olympic symbol and remained unaware of the implications the bid had for the production of space.
Symbolically Manipulated?

In a recent paper tracing Toronto’s shift to competitive city planning, Stefan Kipfer and Roger Keil (2002) use Toronto’s Olympic bid, the waterfront redevelopment initiative and the creation of a new official plan for the City of Toronto as examples that saw the removal of politics from the planning process. They argue that the vision for these three efforts were “driven by city planners, developers, architects, and business lobbies with connections to transnational capital and the provincial and federal governments” (Kipfer & Keil 2002, 229). They claim that “urbanists, “progressive” councilors and environmentalists” were “reluctant to criticize the Olympic bid and waterfront development” because of promises of “environmental modernization” (Kipfer and Keil 2002, 249). From their point of view, the Olympics represented nothing more than “a new phase in the embourgeoisement of inner-city Toronto” that would have added to the “centralizing decision-making, dissociating development from public politics, and aestheticizing urban development” (Kipfer and Keil 2002, 251).

Ken Greenberg, described the situation in the following manner:

When the Olympics, or when the idea of going for the Olympic bid came along, and this is not unique to Toronto, it is something you have seen in other Olympic bids, they needed to create a problem that they would solve with the Olympic bid… my perception is that what happened is they seized on the waterfront … rather than portraying all of the [smaller scale] steps that were under way … this incremental work [that was being done]… it was seen as beneficial and expedient to portray all of this as abject failure and to make it appear that there was this extraordinary
problem, or deficit, or failure in Toronto, which was the waterfront and that the Olympics would be the answer. And this is not unusual, I mean you try and create a situation where you want to drum up political support and you want to get other levels of government to commit resources so you need a public perception that there is a great big issue to be solved … What they were trying to create [was] a vehicle that would deliver funds to Toronto and enable the transformation to be carried out in the event of success with the Olympic bid. And that is really where the work of Robert Fung and the TWRC was born – the idea for that vehicle. (Greenberg 2004)

Although a highly skilled planner who is known for his waterfront redevelopment expertise, Greenberg decided to steer clear of the Olympic bidding process. He noted that there “was the emergence of a kind of consortia of groups, private sector groups, both in the consulting world and the business world that had emerged, that were not elected, were not formally chosen in any way” (Greenberg 2004). Reflecting on the process, Greenberg (Greenberg 2004) noted:

people in many cases were self-appointed and what they agreed to do was to do work on spec, work for which they were not being paid on the understanding that should things materialize they would get the work and I think this is, I mean it easy to understand under the circumstances why this is appealing because you don’t have to go to the public, you don’t have to ask for money, you can get a lot of things done without paying for them, but I think it is fundamentally unhealthy because it basically moves a lot
of decisions and a lot of assumptions and work into a kind of shadowy world where things are not transparent, where public priorities are not necessarily guiding what is done and where there is much less accountability and so unlike the Olympics in many other countries where it was clear that the very best people from the country and in some cases from outside the country would be selected through a competitive process to do the design, this is not what was going on in Toronto.

Perhaps the clearest example of the narrowing of decision-making was the diminished role that David Crombie played during the last year of the bid. Crombie’s (Crombie 2004a) words are telling:

[t]he last year or so, I had to choose whether or not I’d actually leave the bid, because it was taken over by Hudson, Harris, Jim Ginou and John Bitove, basically…

I had a choice, I could have said, I don’t like what’s happening, so I’m resigning from chair of the bid, and that’s a hard thing. If you’re eighteen and want to thump your chest, that’s the thing to do. But the consequences of that would have been to destroy the bid …that would have really hurt the bid at the crucial time. I had convinced hundreds, if not thousands of people, and certainly people I didn’t even know, who had a faith in the bid. It was not sufficient to destroy that faith, so I chose to swallow my pride and stay.

Crombie (2004a) explains, “I made sure that there was no daylight between Bitove and myself, made sure people didn’t know… and on these things, in that kind of competition
the smallest things can become big pieces of artillery by your opposition.” Once again the necessity of demonstrating unity to the IOC took precedence.

During the final months of preparations, TO-Bid was frequently criticized for a lack of transparency. Groups such as Bread Not Circuses and various journalists helped to reveal the inconsistencies and inadequacies with the bid. Bitove and others members of TO-Bid were cognizant of the lingering local unease but they also recognized that they simply had to move on. In Bitove’s opinion, if TO-Bid had spent more time on planning for the local community, it would have been impossible effectively to sell the bid internationally (Bitove 2004). They had come to the point where the IOC’s decision mattered more. In fairness to the bid team it should be noted that Torontonians had consistently asked: what can the Olympics do for us? What the local constituency and council had not reflected on with the same degree of passion was how Toronto might aid the Olympic movement. Self-reflection of this sort would have producing a troubling image. At the same time, the City of Toronto was actively seeking the Olympic Games, it was experiencing drastic cutbacks to its recreation programs and was steadily increasing user-fees for access to sport facilities such as swimming pools. Simply put, very few people bothered to think about the role of sport – especially amateur sport – in the city’s public culture as being critical to the success of their bid. As we shall see it was a costly mistake.

Upon returning from the Olympics in Sydney (2000), Bitove acknowledged that the bid had a credibility problem, a situation he linked to the failure of the senior levels of government to proceed with the waterfront redevelopment. The difficulty did not stem from the municipal government which had approved the waterfront redevelopment

69 Bruce Kidd was one notable exception.
project in the summer and had used an interim-control bylaw to “freeze” critical land on the waterfront until waterfront and Olympic decisions were made (Abbate, *The Globe and Mail*, 5 October 2000, A18). But the IOC’s message had been clear. They would not be satisfied with political promises. Without a firm financial commitment for waterfront infrastructure the bid would fail. Given that both Toronto’s municipal election and the Federal election were scheduled for the fall it was evident that timing was critical. TO-Bid simply could not afford to wait until the elections unfolded before beginning work on their final bid book(s). In addition, Robert Fung repeatedly warned the government players that they if were waiting to see if Toronto won the Games before making their funding decisions the bid would lose. Interestingly, John Lorinc (2001, online) explained that prior to attending the Sydney Olympics, “a senior federal official” called Karen Pitre of To-Bid, inquiring about “how much of Fung’s $5.2-billion plan for the waterfront was essential for mounting the Games.” Lorinc informs us that Pitre and Bill Longden (of MMM) came up with a number: $1.5 billion.

Skipping forward to October we once again find Jean Chretien, Mike Harris and Mel Lastman joining forces in the port lands to announce a $1.5 billion commitment (1/3 from each government) to waterfront redevelopment. Much of Toronto’s commitment was to be in the form of land not cash. TO-Bid naturally applauded the announcement, but those interested in the larger picture expressed dismay. For example, Christopher Hume (*The Toronto Star*, 14 July 2000, B01) argued that “revitalizing the port lands represents nothing less than the completion of Toronto.” Hume (*The Toronto Star*, 21 October 2000, B04) declared the $1.5 billion commitment to be “disappointing and woefully inadequate.” The weak total, he thought, “reminds us just how little faith we
have in ourselves, how hard we find it to take ourselves seriously. If we can’t, why would anybody else” (Hume, *The Toronto Star*, 21 October 2000, B04)? There is little doubt that Hume included the IOC in his list of those individuals and organizations who were reluctant to view Toronto as a serious global city. Given the massive gap between what was pledged and what was required, Hume explained that the money needed to be spent wisely: “[t]o spend with the Olympics in mind will inevitably lead to short-term choices that will serve neither the Games nor the city” (Hume, *The Toronto Star*, 21 October 2000, B04). He reminded his readers that “the city still hasn’t managed to build a decent baseball stadium” and asked them “[w]hy should the Games be different” (Hume, *The Toronto Star*, 21 October 2000, B04)? For Hume it was the lack of a desire for civic greatness and leadership as much as the lack of infrastructure that made Toronto a good second choice.

Morley Kells also remained unimpressed. He dissected the announcement and the commitments made by the various governments and explained that politicians had “destroyed the visionary foundation” that had been created by the waterfront revitalization Task Force (Kells, *The Toronto Star*, 27 October 2000, A17). Kells’s allegiance remained with the province’s taxpayers. He continued to express concern over the Olympic bid’s role in waterfront development claiming that the details remained elusive. “Once they begin on portlands development, with or without the Olympics,” he explained “it can become an irreversible drain on the public purse. None of the details has ever been debated in the House of Commons, the Ontario Legislature or City Hall, although the Toronto Council approved it in principle” (Kells, *The Toronto Star*, 27 October 2000, A17). For Kells the process was tainted. In the absence of democratic
debate, the waterfront plan and its link to the Olympic blueprint were still operating in a democratic deficit.

Morley Kells worked diligently to demonstrate that wanting the Olympics and being able to shape the process defining where and how they are to be staged are two different concerns. For many, an Olympic bid should be viewed as an instrument that allows a powerful elite to advance a particular urban agenda. An examination of the site plan printed in TO-Bid’s final bid books confirms this sentiment (Figure 10.6).

![Figure 10.6. Toronto 2008 Olympic Bid Concept For the Portlands Area](image)

In the final months leading up to the IOC’s decision a number of columnists and concerned citizens criticized the symbolic manipulation of the Olympic symbol that had
taken place. For example, Dave Perkins (*The Toronto Star*, 13 January 2001, C06) criticized Toronto’s City Council for “roll[ing] over at every opportunity for...[the] bid machine.” Bread Not Circuses released their “Anti-Olympic Bid Book” which challenged the meaning of the Olympics and the rationale for hosting them in Toronto. Critical to their skepticism was that fact that TO-Bid’s executive committee held meetings that once they finally became “open to the public” they were protected by “By-laws [that] ban[ned] any questions from the public” (Bread Not Circuses Coalition, 2001, 21). In addition, Bread Not Circuses highlighted that TO-Bid’s bid books were delivered to the IOC without ever having been available for public scrutiny. In response, TO-Bid claimed that the competitive nature of the bidding process required secrecy so that the other candidate cities would not benefit from having viewed Toronto’s plans. At the same time, the IOC had made it clear that the TO-bid’s bid book “may not be distributed or made public until it has been submitted to the IOC, and the IOC’s written authorization has been obtained” (IOC 2000a). On the issue of waterfront development Bread Not Circuses argued that “[t]he line between the Olympics and the Waterfront isn’t clear. In fact, the Waterfront seems to be the planning front for the Games” (Bread Not Circuses Coalition, 2001, 89). Eric Reguly (*The Globe and Mail*, 6 March 2001, B16) expanded on this theme noting the bid book did not include a number of critical and costly expenditures including “[t]he costs of the land for the Olympic village, stadium and other facilities.” For Reguly, after years of preparation, the bid team had still not provided answers to questions concerning the management of public land. “We don’t know” Reguly (*The Globe and Mail*, 6 March 2001, B16) noted, “whether the developers will be

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given publicly owned land free in exchange for clearing it up, or whether they will assume only part of the cost.” In the absence of this type of information many Olympic critics, including Councilor Walker, claimed that the “previous campaign to land the Summer Olympics was a far more open process that more freely divulged budget information and accepted the fact that detractors would be heard” (Philp, *The Globe and Mail*, 30 June 2001, A16). For others, such as Craig Daniels (*The Toronto Sun*, 17 March 2001, online), the 2008 bid had a “sense of professionalism, of being contemporary and far-reaching—a sense of inclusion.” But he readily admitted that his reason for wanting the Games stemmed from his “own level of exasperation with the state of the city’s infrastructure, and the lack of political/public will to do anything about it unless an Olympics is the motivation, is part of the reason.” In more detail Daniels explains:

> John Bitove … is a deal maker, far more so than Paul Henderson, who was behind the ’96 attempt, and deal making is what this entire process amounts to. Part of the deal is selling the public. Maybe what this says is we have been had, co-opted in a highly sophisticated way.

> Maybe, 11 years later, we want to be, or are more willing to be.

(*Toronto Sun*, 17 March 2001, online)

**A ‘deal’ for the waterfront?**

By the time Toronto’s Olympic bid reached the final stretch run in the spring of 2001, Crombie’s idea of a “Toronto Olympic bid” had not only been recasted but it had been rescripted into a far more purposeful planning initiative. The boundaries between Olympic planning and waterfront planning had been so thoroughly blurred that John
Barber (*The Globe and Mail*, 16 January 2001, A17) asked his readers to consider what might happen if the bid failed. In Barber’s (*The Globe and Mail*, 16 January 2001, A17) opinion, “[g]iven the expectations [that were] loaded on the bid … the wreckage would be spectacular.” Christopher Hume (*The Toronto Star*, 6 March 2001, B01) shared Barber concern arguing that Toronto had “put all of its eggs in the Olympic basket”, including too many issues and items that he felt were “too critical to be left to the chance that we might win the Games.” But perhaps the most forceful comments belong to Robert Fulford (*National Post*, 7 July 2001, F1):

[i]n the psychological history of Toronto, has there ever been a process as disconcerting and pathetic as the attempt to attract the 2008 Olympic Games? Win or lose, we should admit that this project has said nothing good about us, our values, or the spirit of our city … Any Olympic bid naturally involves a contradiction: it combines implausible braggadocio with humiliating genuflection. The city that wants to become the site of the Olympics must boast and beg at the same time. It must claim to be a metropolis of the highest class while simultaneously abasing itself to seduce a committee of suspicious strangers.

Other observers were more concerned with what might happen if Toronto won. In the final months leading up to the IOC’s decision numerous decisions were fast-tracked to appease the expectations of the international panel of judges. For example, the ongoing struggle to ensure that the Olympics did not over-expose Toronto’s taxpaying public led to the formation of an agreement with the Ontario government to have the latter responsible for cost overruns. The agreement essentially put the province in charge of the
Olympic Games. The negotiation over the composition of the potential Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (OCOG) served to legitimate the province’s power (provincial (and COA) representatives outnumbered members of the City of Toronto). Finally, the city had agreed to the formation of an interim waterfront revitalization corporation. It was a decision that many felt further reduced “the public’s ability to determine what should happen with the public lands known as the Portlands.”

Gord Gordon, former policy analyst with the Royal Commission on the Future of Toronto Waterfront nicely summarizes the intertwining of the production of symbols and space during the Olympic bidding process:

Olympic construction requires a central command structure and the subjugation of democracy … Our waterfront will be reconstructed according to ToBid’s image of it, as dictated by Olympic-venue requirements. This means very limited community involvement in shaping the type of waterfront we want and need. It means that the public is left to respond to proposals from on high, or to absent itself from a debate that it was never intended to enter. Waterfront land is too valuable to be left in the control of any single-purpose group. To plan and construct a waterfront without real community participation is shortsighted. To construct it at one point in time for one purpose, the Olympics, is myopic (quoted by Garland, The Globe and Mail, 28 August 2000, A11).

In order to make the bid competitive, numerous agreements where struck and nearly all of them were shielded from public input. A successful Olympic bid ultimately would

71 see http://eastern.sierraclub.ca/pressrelease/pressrelease20010524.shtml
represent a centralized development agency, with many actors who were not quite in touch with the development process. It was a scenario that many feared might occur all along, but one that many felt powerless to prevent. The fate of Toronto’s Port lands residing in the hands of the IOC was “kind of pathetic” in the opinion of William Thorsell. For Thorsell the situation meant “that we are saying to ourselves that some committee in Lausanne is going to have a veto over whether we should take care of our own city” (quoted in Lewington, *Globe and Mail*, 28 February 2001, A16). Robert Fulford (*National Post*, 7 July 2001, F1) was even more direct:

> [t]he official propaganda from the City of Toronto Olympic office says the "2008 Olympic Games and the Bid for these Games" will create substantial legacies, among them a "stronger community spirit and pride."

Perhaps there are citizens who agree with that. My sense is that precisely the opposite is the case. As we wait for the decision from the International Olympics Committee meeting in Moscow, we should be contemplating not the bright possibilities of our future but the period of intense confusion and embarrassment we have just come through. No matter how much good the Olympics may do Toronto if we get them, they are unlikely to undo the harm that the Olympic bid has already done.
Chapter 11. Conclusions

Symbolic failure?

On 13 July 2001, at the 112th session of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Moscow, the 2008 Olympic Games were awarded to Beijing, China. That Beijing won was not surprising, as it had been the heavy favourite since entering the competition. For many of Toronto’s bid boosters, though, “it came as a shock to lose to Beijing by such a wide margin” (Booth et al. 2001, 26). As Table 11.1 indicates, Toronto lost on the second ballot having captured only twenty-one percent of the eligible votes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>1st round</th>
<th>2nd round</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Istanbul</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>6</td>
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The decision brought to a close several years of boisterous lobbying by several cities. Like most major decisions, the end came rather abruptly for Toronto’s bid team. It was the second time in eleven years that Toronto failed to win the bid following their loss to Atlanta in 1990. Ironically, in that competition, Toronto also captured twenty-two votes (Table 11.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>Round 2</th>
<th>Round 3</th>
<th>Round 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgrade</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Toronto</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
For Bruce Kidd, former Olympian, Dean of the Faculty of Physical Education and Health (University of Toronto), and Officer of the Order of Canada, Toronto’s failure to secure the Games necessitated a moment of reflection. Involved with Toronto’s 2008 Olympic Bid as the volunteer chair of the legacy and community enhancement committee, Kidd praised the bid team’s ability for including athletes in the decision-making process, for negotiating price guarantees (i.e. construction costs) and for striving to produce a workable social equity plan (Kidd 2004). At the same time, Kidd also noted that the bid suffered from one serious flaw. Referring to what he terms the bids “contextual contradictions”, Kidd (Booth et al. 2001, 27) argues that one crippling feature of the bid was:

[t]he systematic destruction of public opportunities for sport, physical education and recreation at all levels—from the community school to Olympic preparations—by the same governments supporting the bid, during the very period the bid was being prepared. In fact, like many other aspects of the bid, the facility and legacy plan could be read as indictment of the social deficit created by the neo-conservative federal, provincial and municipal governments of recent years.

Kidd (Booth et al. 2001, 27) enforces his point by highlighting that even in the politically charged moments of the final weeks of the bid’s preparation, Juan Antonio Samaranch (then President of the IOC) “asked one Canadian lobbyist ‘why the IOC would put the Games in a country that cannot make its mind up about sports?’” It was verbal confirmation of an opinion that had been looming over Toronto’s bid team for some time.
Kevin Wamsley (1999, 14) had voiced the “contradiction” two years earlier: “[i]t seems that in a socially just society, a right to a decent quality of life, including daily access to recreation and physical activity, would define a ‘world class’ city much better than hosting the Olympic Games.” Concern over Canada’s status as a sporting backwater, and the possibility of being embarrassed should Toronto be granted the right to host the 2008 Olympic bid, were printed in major newspapers (Starnes, The Ottawa Citizen, 20 February 2001, A1) in the months leading to the IOC’s decision. As late as February 2001, Mark Lowry, Director of Sport for the Canadian Olympic Association expressed his dismay about the quality of the Canadian sports structure. These apprehensions provided the backdrop for a series of sport-related seminars and a sports summit in late April of 2001. This must be considered as abysmal timing for Toronto’s bid boosters, given that the attempt to remedy systemic problems was being tackled just a few months prior the final city selection in Moscow.

For a city that struggled to provide access to sporting opportunities for its citizens and struggled to develop its waterfront, the IOC’s decision was clear. A bit more self-evaluation was needed before Toronto could play host to the world. For Kidd (Booth et al. 2001, 27), the IOC was partly to blame: “[i]f the Olympic Games is truly to be a showcase for the realization of Olympic values, the IOC should make it be known that it will only award the Games to countries that show an exemplary record in the provision of physical activity for all its citizens.” At the same time, Kidd (2004) recognized that “twenty years of cut backs and mediocre leadership” had left Toronto with a sporting culture in need of repair. Strengthening Toronto’s (and the country’s) sport development system, Kidd reasons, required a rethinking of the values of amateur sport and the
functioning of the local sport clubs. It also necessitated rebuilding the fractured sporting landscape through increased investing public infrastructure and through creating greater access to opportunities for participation (Kidd 2004). In short, Kidd (2006, 710) posits that a reinvestment that “echoes the muscular Christian interventions of a century ago” would not be misguided.

What about the public’s waterfront? John Dewey (1954[1927], 146) once remarked, “[t]he prime difficulty [in the production of a political public sphere] … is that of discovering the means by which a scattered, mobile and manifold public may so recognize itself as to define and express its interests.” He further noted that “the essential need … is the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion” (Dewey 1954[1927], 2008). For Rosie DiManno (The Toronto Star 14 July 2001, B01), the Olympic bid “did serve a civic purpose” because “[i]t allowed the imagination to soar.” But as Robert Fulford (1995, 14) reminds us, “[a] successful “city” fulfills itself not by master plans but through attentiveness to the processes that have created it – and an awareness of its possibilities.” The Olympic bidding process did little to encourage the formation of a social space of communication. Instead, discussions about the meaning and values of the Olympics and the waterfront were detached from the public’s physical presence—with the public’s influence carrying little authority. Following the IOC’s decision, numerous commentators stressed the need to seize the momentum of the Olympic planning process and to proceed with waterfront development. But as David Crombie (2004a) explains, once “the thumb print of the Olympic bid was removed, people [governments] went back to old habits … each claiming ownership of the diverse parcels [on the waterfront].” What was needed in
councilor David Miller’s estimation was “leadership to let our citizens’ voices be heard. We must not extinguish the belief that people can make a difference in their communities. We need to engage our residents in a process to harness their imagination and ideas” (quoted by Miller, The Globe and Mail, 17 July 2001, A17).

In the spring of 2004, three years removed from the IOC’s verdict, David Crombie wrote a thoughtful piece from which those still suffering from the Olympic failure might find comfort. In a short article entitled, “Our public realm,” Crombie notes, “communities do not become civic because they are successful. They become successful because they are civic.” Reflecting on the Toronto’s struggle to define itself in the twenty-first century, Crombie (2004b) reminded his readers that:

[t]he quality of urban life in Toronto has been rooted deeply in the quality and strength of its public realm. Education, healthcare, social services, public transit, arts and culture, energy resources, public safety and security, justice, libraries, environmental stewardship, roads, streets and public places have been the connecting tissues linking our individual private worlds and fusing one generation to another. The public realm has been the glue that holds the City together and the bedrock upon which it built its prosperity, its communities and its social peace.” Crombie (2004b)

For Toronto to renew itself, it is necessary for the public to find its voice, and to assert its presence. For the citizenry of Toronto in the new millennium, urban public space making remains “their prerogative, and their duty, to define and defend their interests in it, often against the concerted opposition of powerful institutions (Rosenweig and Blackmar
paraphrased in Goheen 2000, 72). To fulfill this duty, the citizenry must remain vigilant about the manner through which urban public space can be symbolically manipulated before it is physically transformed. It requires a careful consideration of how the production of powerful symbols like the Olympic symbol can reflect an attempt to create consensus and control over urban order and space. The art of public space making requires us to demand that questions concerning access, ownership and use are not resolved through a process of seductive advertising and design, but through communicative debate where decisions are legitimated not decreed. The act of making public space must continue to be political. The meaning of public space must remain open to reinvention, otherwise, we risk succumbing to a political process that substitutes spaces of appearance with packaged symbols of consensus.

The struggle to lay claim to Toronto’s waterfront continues, as does the search for appropriate signs and symbols upon which to negotiate and galvanize shared experience.
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