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EDITORIALS

An expressway park

While consultants test waterfront commissioner David Crombie's dubious belief that the Gardiner Expressway is unnecessary, a Toronto architect has a more realistic idea.

Julian Jacobs agrees with Crombie — and almost everyone else — that the Gardiner is an unsightly barrier to the Toronto waterfront. But unlike Crombie, Jacobs realizes that Metro needs a major expressway to connect the thousands of cars travelling east into downtown along the QEW and south from the Don Valley Parkway. That's why he's proposing that the Gardiner be re-built at street level and hidden by an elevated park.

Jacobs' innovative scheme, unveiled this week, would create a "river of green" along the lakefront with trees, grass, a pedestrian boardwalk and cycling paths.

He would do this by building a concrete structure over the northern side of the new expressway and covering it with fill and topsoil. The southern side would be left open to the air.

While Jacobs is vague about the costs and traffic disruption during construction, his idea would no doubt be cheaper than a plan to reroute the Gardiner into a tunnel under Lake Ontario. That plan — proposed by developer Bill Teron in 1989 — would cost between \$2 and \$3 billion, according to Metro estimates.

The review of Crombie's proposal to scrap the Gardiner and instead use improved streets and public transit is expected to be released this fall. Jacobs' idea deserves consideration during that debate.