

Strategic Plan

Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation

2012-2016

The Mission and Vision below have guided the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation well over the last seven years and continue to be relevant. They clearly articulate our view that the Greenbelt is not just a land-use plan, but an active, living area with enormous agricultural, environmental and economic potential. Possibility does indeed grow here.

1. Our Mission

The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation is dedicated to promoting and sustaining the Greenbelt as a beneficial, valuable, and permanent feature that enhances the quality of life for all residents of Ontario.

2. Our Vision

Our vision is a vibrant and healthy Greenbelt with a protected and restored natural environment, a strong and successful working countryside, a robust agricultural sector, and patterns of urban settlement, which support the integrity of the Greenbelt.

3. Our Goals

Over the next four years, the Foundation is committed to achieving the following goals. We will:

- (1) work to ensure a successful 2015 Review that leads to a richer, greener, and more robust Greenbelt
- (2) strengthen the viability of farming in the Greenbelt
- (3) broaden and deepen public understanding of, and support for, the Greenbelt
- (4) operate an efficient and transparent organization, and begin to seek new and diverse funding.

This sharp focus allows the Foundation to use its limited resources effectively while aiming for significant impact.

4. Our Focus

Over the course of the next four years, we will look to these four goals to guide our work. This section describes priority areas and activities that will assist in accomplishing them.

4.1. The 2015 Review

The *Greenbelt Act, 2005* (Section 10) and the Greenbelt Plan (Section 5.6) stipulate that there will be a review of the Plan every ten years to determine:

- (1) the effectiveness of the policies contained in the Greenbelt Plan; and,
- (2) whether the Greenbelt Plan should be revised to improve the effectiveness and relevance of the policies.

Our primary focus for this strategic plan is the 2015 Review and hence the suggested timeframe of 2012 to 2016.

The 2015 Review is an opportunity to engage Ontarians in a dialogue about the importance of the Greenbelt as an agricultural, economic, and environmental model. To assist with an open, fair, and effective Review, the Foundation will undertake activities such as:

- establishing a *2015 Review Secretariat* that will collect and distribute information, compile key findings from existing research and monitoring data, and supplement it with additional research where needed
- convening an informal *2015 Review Network* consisting of multiple interests whose purpose will be to participate in and contribute to the 2015 Review
- aligning stakeholders and allies that intend to participate in and contribute to the 2015 Review
- allocating sufficient financial resources to enable participation in, and contribution to, the 2015 Review
- gathering support among municipalities and conservation authorities
- providing communications support to increase, in the context of the 2015 Review, the public's understanding of the benefits of the Greenbelt and the issues affecting the integrity of the Greenbelt

4.2. Viability of Farming in the Greenbelt

With some of the most fertile soils and favourable climatic conditions in the province, the largest concentration of farmers and residents in Canada, and an abundance of products grown and raised locally, there is tremendous potential to keep building a regional local food system that supports and promotes agriculture in and around the Greenbelt.

Over and above broader issues facing farming in the province, key considerations for the continued viability of farming in the Greenbelt include keeping protected farmlands in production, expanding mechanisms to facilitate the flow of food from field to table, and developing policies that are responsive to the particular needs and opportunities of near urban farmers.

As a result, the Foundation is committed to:

- enhancing our relationships with farmers, farm organizations and the diverse farm communities of the Greenbelt
- promoting Greenbelt-grown food to residents, as well as the agri-food value chain
- establishing structural and permanent elements of a local food system in Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe region.

To accomplish these objectives, the Foundation will undertake activities such as:

- supporting new mechanisms / structures that facilitate the availability of Greenbelt grown food to consumers, including developing new distribution links between farmers and buyers, for example, through Ontariofresh.ca and Greenbeltfresh.ca and more regional aggregation options
- developing and promoting policies favouring Greenbelt-grown food and viable farming
- supporting the implementation of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Action Plan 2021
- promoting locally-grown ethno-cultural crops, in particular the transformation from the research stage to the full-scale agricultural production stage
- researching trends in agriculture in the Greenbelt and comparable geographies to identify potential issues
- identifying and understanding issues affecting viability of near-urban agriculture and particular agricultural sectors in the Greenbelt.

Each of our activities will foster the urban-rural relationship, working towards a more understanding, dependable, and productive relationship.

4.3. Public Understanding of and Support for the Greenbelt

When the Greenbelt was created in 2005, the public had little knowledge of its benefits. Since then, the Greenbelt has become the most recognized environmental initiative in Ontario and has garnered significant public support.

The Foundation is committed to:

- increasing the public's understanding of, and support for, the Greenbelt as essential for a healthy and prosperous Ontario
- providing the public with timely and reliable information and analysis about the Greenbelt so that the public may be involved in the 2015 Review
- inspiring the public's commitment to and belief in the Greenbelt as an enduring social good and an essential social / agricultural / environmental / economic asset
- deepening the public's awareness and understanding about all that the Greenbelt provides
- building a diversity of supporters and champions of the Greenbelt.

Prioritized activities that will help accomplish these objectives are to:

- develop relationships and partnerships with various sectors of Ontario society to enable the Foundation to engage in and support educational activities about the Greenbelt for key audiences
- publish and promote annual reports, educational materials, research papers, guides, maps, etc.
- utilize websites, social media, video and other technologies to facilitate communication about the Greenbelt

- manage the placement of permanent Greenbelt road and trail signs in municipalities across the Greenbelt
- develop and execute special events and activities on key issues
- undertake initiatives to build and support the Global Greenbelts Network
- provide communication support to recipients of grants from the Foundation.

4.4. Operational Considerations

The Foundation is run as a cost-effective and efficient organization with a great deal of transparency. Management will continue to build on this success. Our objectives include:

- operating an efficient organization, with a focus on keeping administrative costs low and maximizing investments in programmatic areas
- being transparent in our decisions and activities
- taking advantage of subsidies for staffing positions
- fostering young talent
- conducting responsible, best-in-class financial management and investment practices.

4.5. Diversified Funding

The Foundation will continue to operate on a spend-down basis for the time being, while raising funding from other sources. Given our strategic direction, there are many opportunities to raise funds. Overall we will aim to:

- raise funds from a variety of sources
- limit engagement of individual donors, but rather focus on corporate, foundation, and government sources
- execute a successful Greenbelt Harvest Picnic with an eye to making this an annual fundraiser
- take advantage of opportunities as they arise, ensuring they fit directly into our goals

5. Summary

This strategic plan can be graphically summarized as:

