

Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation 2015 Co-ordinated Land Use Review: Town Hall Q&A



Possibility grows here.



1. WHAT IS THE ONTARIO GREENBELT?

The Greenbelt is nearly two million acres of protected agricultural and environmentally sensitive land. Stretching across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Greenbelt protects the productive farmlands that feed us, the landscapes that clean our water, the trees that filter our air, and supports the health and economies of our communities.

The Greenbelt surrounds the western shores of Lake Ontario, from Niagara-on-the-Lake, through the GTA, to just north of Cobourg in Northumberland County.

The Greenbelt includes the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges Moraine, and nearly one million acres of Protected Countryside.

2. WHAT IS THE GREENBELT PLAN?

The Greenbelt Plan is the Ontario land use plan that established the Greenbelt in 2005. The Greenbelt Plan exists alongside two earlier land use plans, the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan. The plans were put in place at different times and reflect the uniqueness of the respective geographies.

The Greenbelt Plan was followed by the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe ("the Growth Plan") in 2006. These two plans work in concert to ensure smart and sustainable development in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The Greenbelt Plan "identifies where urbanization should not occur in order to provide permanent protection to the agricultural land base and the ecological features and functions occurring" on the almost 2 million acres that make up the Greenbelt.

3. WHAT IS THE COORDINATED LAND USE PLAN REVIEW?

When the Greenbelt was established in 2005, the province set a review date of 2015 to ensure that it was continuing to meet its intended goals. The 2015 Coordinated Land Use Plan Review looks at the Greenbelt Plan alongside 3 other land use plans: The Growth Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan, and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. The review focuses on how the plans can better achieve the following six goals:

Protecting agricultural land, water and natural areas

Fostering healthy, liveable and inclusive communities

Building communities that attract workers and create jobs

Addressing climate change and building resilient communities

Keeping people and goods moving, and building cost effective infrastructure

Improving implementation and better aligning the plans

The Review will include two formal stages of public consultation.

The first stage, which begins in late March, includes Town Hall Meetings across the Greater Golden Horseshoe and opportunities to submit feedback online or through mail.

For more info visit: ontario.ca/landuseplanningreview or greenbelt.ca/2015review



Possibility grows here.



4. HOW DOES THE GREENBELT CONTRIBUTE TO SMART GROWTH?

The Ontario Greenbelt Plan draws a permanent line that protects productive agricultural land and environmentally sensitive land from urban growth and sprawl.

The area between the Greenbelt and urban centres to the south contains enough land to accommodate development for several generations.

The Greenbelt Plan works in conjunction with the Growth Plan and Ontario's Transit Plan ("The Big Move") to promote healthy, livable, and inclusive communities.

5. HOW DOES THE GREENBELT HELP TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY?

The Greenbelt Plan provides permanent protection for approximately 860,000 acres of fertile farmland including the province's only two specialty crop areas (the Holland Marsh and the Niagara Peninsula and Tender Fruit Area).

The Greenbelt provides certainty for the agricultural sector for their long-term investment in, improvement to, and management of the land.

The Greenbelt Plan allows for infrastructure to support farming and the flexibility needed for farmers to adapt and innovate.

The Greenbelt prevents fragmentation of the farmland, helping to maintain a strong agriculture system.

In 2011, \$2.65 billion in GDP was generated by farming in the Golden Horseshoe and Greenbelt.

The Greenbelt protects the land base for tourism, agriculture, and the local economy, and designates important green spaces for residents of the Golden Horseshoe.

Based on municipal projections, more than 80 percent of GTA land available for development will still be unused in 2031.

6. HOW DOES THE GREENBELT PROTECT NATURAL HERITAGE AND CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE?

The Greenbelt's ecosystems help sustain the health and well-being of many Ontarians and have an estimated economic value of \$2.6 billion annually - that's an average of \$3,487 per hectare!

The Greenbelt is home to 78 species at risk, habitat loss is a threat to 97% of them.

Key watershed services provided by the Greenbelt include water filtration, waste treatment, flow regulation & flood and erosion control. These services help to protect the Great Lakes, the drinking water source of over 8.5 million Canadians.

As a carbon sink, the Greenbelt has offset the pollution equivalent of 255 million cars.

7. HOW DOES THE GREENBELT SUPPORT THE HEALTH AND ECONOMIES OF OUR COMMUNITIES?

Each year the Greenbelt generates more than \$9.2 billion in economic activity and is responsible for 161,000 direct and indirect jobs in agriculture tourism and forestry.