



Possibility grows here.

Greenbelt Foundation

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## **GREENBELT FOUNDATION BACKGROUNDER**

### **Funding Renewal Announcement**

**Date:** February 23, 2021

**Prepared for:** Various Media

**Prepared by:** Greenbelt Foundation

#### Overview

The Ontario Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks confirmed funding renewal of \$12M over three years (2021–2023) for the Greenbelt Foundation. On December 18, a formal Transfer Payment Agreement was signed between the Foundation and the Government of Ontario, outlining key priorities for the three years ahead.

Since 2005, the Foundation has received \$57 million in funding from the Ontario government. Building on 15 years, the Foundation's work, and investments for 2021 and beyond will continue to centre on restoring, enhancing, and educating about the Greenbelt's vast and diverse natural areas. These areas currently support 177,700 full-time or full-time equivalent jobs, contribute an estimated \$9.6 billion in GDP to Ontario's economy, and provide \$3.2 billion worth of ecosystem services, including water purification and flood prevention to the 1 in 3 Canadians who make the Greater Golden Horseshoe their home.

#### Support from our Partners

*Support from the Greenbelt Foundation contributes to the restoration of wetlands that act as critical natural infrastructure to help to slow water and retain nutrients as it travels downstream through watersheds. We thank the Government of Ontario for its continued investment in the Foundation, which is playing an important role in protecting natural areas and prime farmland to help ensure a more climate resilient future for Ontario.*

**—Lynette Mader, Manager of Operations, Ducks Unlimited Canada**

*At the Intact Centre, we were pleased to hear of this new Provincial investment that will help to preserve natural infrastructure while limiting future risk of flooding. Ontario's Greenbelt is a unique asset, and the work of the Foundation to retain and restore natural infrastructure cannot be overstated as a means to serve the environmental, economic and social needs of Ontarians."*

**—Dr. Blair Feltmate, Head, Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation,  
University of Waterloo**

*The Greenbelt Foundation played a key role in supporting the Farmers' Market Network and moving its members to online markets when COVID-19 hit, which was critical support for farmers and local food. Continued support from the Foundation helps us to maintain a leadership role in strengthening farmers' markets and access to local food throughout southern Ontario.*

**—Daniel Taylor, Co-Director, Greenbelt Markets**

*The Greenbelt Foundation has been one of the best things to happen to our countryside and watersheds. Though its many partnerships, the Foundation has revealed the importance and benefits of protecting and promoting our rural landscapes and assets. We have been proud to work with the Greenbelt Foundation to add hundreds of kilometres of recreational cycling opportunities for Ontarians and visitors, while also promoting the Greenbelt's rural communities, its river valleys, and our Great Lakes. It's good to see the Province recognize the value and importance of the Greenbelt Foundation to Ontarians with this three-year investment.*

**—Marlaine Koehler, Executive Director, Waterfront Regeneration Trust**

*The Greenbelt Foundation has been a critical partner to achieving our vision for the 100km Credit Valley Trail. We are pleased to see the Province make this new investment in the Foundation so it can continue its exceptional history of investment and supporting community needs, including local tourism. In collaboration with partners, we will continue to educate visitors about the importance of the Greenbelt in contributing to healthy river valleys for our communities.*

**—Terri LeRoux, Executive Director, Credit Valley Conservation Foundation**

*The Greenbelt Foundation has been a key partner in helping to realize our vision for the Moccasin Identifier Project, which educates both adults and young people about the history of the Indigenous and First Nations on the landscape in this geography. Meegwetch to this new support from the Province of Ontario.*

**—Carolyn King, former Chief of Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and  
Founder of Moccasin Identifier Project**

### Examples of Key Program Activities

**Ducks Unlimited Canada** and the Greenbelt Foundation have partnered to support the installation of a naturalized stormwater management system in a new development site in accordance with existing municipal policy and regulations. This naturalized stormwater management pond will become a fully functioning ecosystem that filters and stores stormwater, prevents flooding, and provides important habitat for biodiversity and greenspace for residents. Through this pilot demonstration, the Greenbelt Foundation and Ducks Unlimited Canada are excited to encourage other regional developers and municipalities to also consider naturalized stormwater management solutions for new and existing developments.

**Waterfront Regeneration Trust** has been supported by the Greenbelt Foundation since 2012 in creating ongoing development of the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail. The Trail connects the Greenbelt and its trails with 3000 km of broader trails traversing the shores of Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake Huron, and Lake



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Nipissing. The broader trails also connect 140 cities, towns, and First Nations; 33 provincial parks; three UNESCO world biosphere reserves; 169 beaches; and 21 national historic sites. The route is a dream for cycling enthusiasts and a fantastic opportunity for families and amateur cyclists interested in exploring the varied landscapes and communities of Ontario. This is especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic where the need for socially-distant outdoor exercise is paramount.

**The Credit Valley Trail *Experience Plan Development***, supported by the Greenbelt Foundation, implemented the 100 km Credit Valley Trail in order to promote tourism and integrate cultural, Indigenous, heritage, and ecological experiences along the banks of the Credit River—one of 21 Greenbelt-protected urban river valleys. Through this project, the Credit Valley Conservation Foundation was able to complete two Experience Plans: an Indigenous Experience Plan; and a Natural and Cultural Heritage Destination Plan. Aspects of an Arts, Culture, and Tourism Plan were also developed. Ultimately, the Credit Valley Trail seeks to change how residents interact with local river valleys in communities and educate a new generation of visitors about the importance of these systems and Greenbelt protection, while also enhancing natural and culture-based recreation and tourism.

**Greenbelt Farmers' Market Network** went online in 2020 with strategic support from the Greenbelt Foundation. Our local farmers are foundational to our region's food supply. Over 50% of Ontario fruit and over 10% of Ontario vegetables are grown in the Greenbelt. The Greenbelt is also home to over 70% of our province's greenhouse capacity. Despite this rich availability of fresh produce, health restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic meant that farmers' markets could not operate as usual in 2020. In order to ensure fresh local food still made its way to residents and that farmers were able to sustain their operations during this difficult time, the Greenbelt Foundation worked with the Greenbelt Farmers' Market Network to create an online pilot project whereby consumers could engage with their local farmers' market virtually, buy food as they normally would, and have it delivered to safe locations. This ultimately resulted in \$1.3 million in sales for Greenbelt farmers from August–December 2020 and supported 570 farmers and vendors.

**Municipal Natural Assets Initiative (MNAI)** and the Greenbelt Foundation are working on a three-year project that enables Ontario municipalities to invest in nature to create better climate resilience, strengthen infrastructure at reduced cost, and protect near-urban natural systems. As a part of this effort, the Greenbelt Foundation and MNAI announced a flagship project in March 2020 in the Greenbelt's Grindstone Creek. The Foundation and MNAI are currently working in partnership with the cities of Hamilton and Burlington, Halton Region, Halton Conservation Authority, and the Royal Botanical Gardens to create an asset management inventory and plan for the Grindstone Creek watershed. In doing this, local municipalities of Hamilton and Burlington will be able to better manage their watershed's natural assets, preventing flooding of nearby communities, and minimizing pollution in Hamilton Harbour. On November 30, 2020, the Greenbelt Foundation announced a second round of natural asset inventories in partnership with MNAI thanks to a \$400,000 private donation.

**The Moccasin Identifier Project** has been keenly supported by the Greenbelt Foundation since 2018 as it works to raise awareness for the current and historical presence of diverse Indigenous communities in the Greenbelt region. The project installs large representations of the distinct moccasins worn by Indigenous communities to mark sites where First Nations and the Metis Nation have deep, ancestral

ties to the landscape. More recently, the project has created a new promotional video and project brief to support partnerships and help it reach new audiences. As a key part of the project, a school toolkit was developed with support from the Foundation and launched with local school boards, providing unique Indigenous-education curriculum opportunities and learnings grounded in Indigenous history, culture, and reconciliation.