



Possibility grows here.

Greenbelt Foundation

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## GREENBELT FOUNDATION BACKGROUNDER

### *Enhancing Municipal Capacity Report*

**Date:** October 7, 2021

**Prepared For:** Various Media

**Prepared By:** Greenbelt Foundation

#### Overview

A new report released by the Greenbelt Foundation outlines opportunities and challenges to municipal planning capacity for rural and agricultural issues. The research team is led by Dr. Wayne Caldwell, University of Guelph, Rural Planning and Development. The report outlines opportunities for municipalities in Ontario to improve their rural and agricultural land-use planning practices to better adapt to trends in the industry, such as climate change and cannabis production.

#### Background

The findings of the *Enhancing Municipal Capacity* report are important for municipal planners and staff, as well as elected officials, to better understand the needs of agriculture in their communities. It is important that municipalities not only understand the agricultural sector, but also have the capacity to proactively plan and respond to emerging challenges and opportunities in the industry, and are able to make timely decisions in support of Ontario's agricultural sector.

In the Greenbelt, municipalities tend to have a larger urban population when compared to municipalities outside of the Greater Golden Horseshoe region. This means that understanding and quickly acting on challenges and opportunities in the agricultural sector are increasingly important due to competing land uses. The findings in this report indicate that increasing municipal capacity, especially in the Greenbelt, will benefit improved evidence-based land-use planning decisions that impact agriculture.

The report identifies 10 opportunities to build the capacity of planners, economic developers, elected officials, and other municipal and provincial staff to support the agricultural and agri-food industries, including:

- Facilitate collaboration and open dialogue between municipalities across the province to share expertise and learn from others' experiences;
- Provide a wider variety of training resources and learning opportunities for municipal planners and staff;
- Build relationships between municipal staff and the agricultural community, and proactively engage local farmers on planning issues;





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- Strengthen the relationship between municipal and provincial planners, so that municipalities can meet provincial mandates effectively and efficiently, and benefit from the Government of Ontario's guidance on land-use planning issues; *and*
- Engage internal reviews of capacity to examine how agriculture can be better integrated into planning decisions.

To see the full list of recommendations, read the full report [HERE](#).

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